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Devolution, health and education
head 30-measure Queen's Speech

Blair pledges shake-up for welfare state

By PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR

TONY BLAIR promised a far-reaching shake-up of the welfare state yesterday as he unveiled the first Labour government programme for nearly 20 years.

The Prime Minister, who abandoned his official car to walk through the crowds from Downing Street to Parliament, hailed a 30-measure Queen's Speech which built on the hope and optimism that were "coursing through the nation". At its heart were measures to improve education and health, tackle crime and a big constitutional package, including Bills to provide for early referendums on a Scottish parliament, Welsh assembly and a new London authority and elected mayor.

As the Government races to begin implementing its manifesto, the Scottish and Welsh referendum Bill will be published today and debated in the Commons next Wednesday and Thursday.

But Mr Blair made plain that the drive to modernise the welfare state and to tackle the £90 billion social security bill was one of his main priorities in the years ahead. He said that "we have reached the limits of the public's willingness simply to fund an un-reformed welfare system through ever higher taxes and spending." He added: "We face the prospect of rising welfare bills, but combined with rising poverty and social division."

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The blunt truth was that the world of 1997 bore little resemblance in work patterns, industrial production and family or social life to the world of 1947. Mr Blair's appointment of the free-thinking Frank Field as his Social Security Minister to oversee a long-term review of welfare reform was a pointer to his intentions.

The programme to get 250,000 young people off welfare and into work through the windfall tax to be introduced in next month's Budget was described by Mr Blair as "one part of the welfare shake-up. He pointed to work already under way on benefit reform, benefit fraud, help for lone parents, the handing of higher education and a planned royal commission on community care.

However, the Prime Minister was also at pains to dampen expectations that too much could be done too quickly, even though they had shown in 12 days how they could make a difference. He said: "We will not put right the damage of 18 years in 18 days or even 18 months."

Mr Blair dubbed his programme "both practical and

radical" and said that just as Labour spoke for the whole nation, it would serve the whole nation.

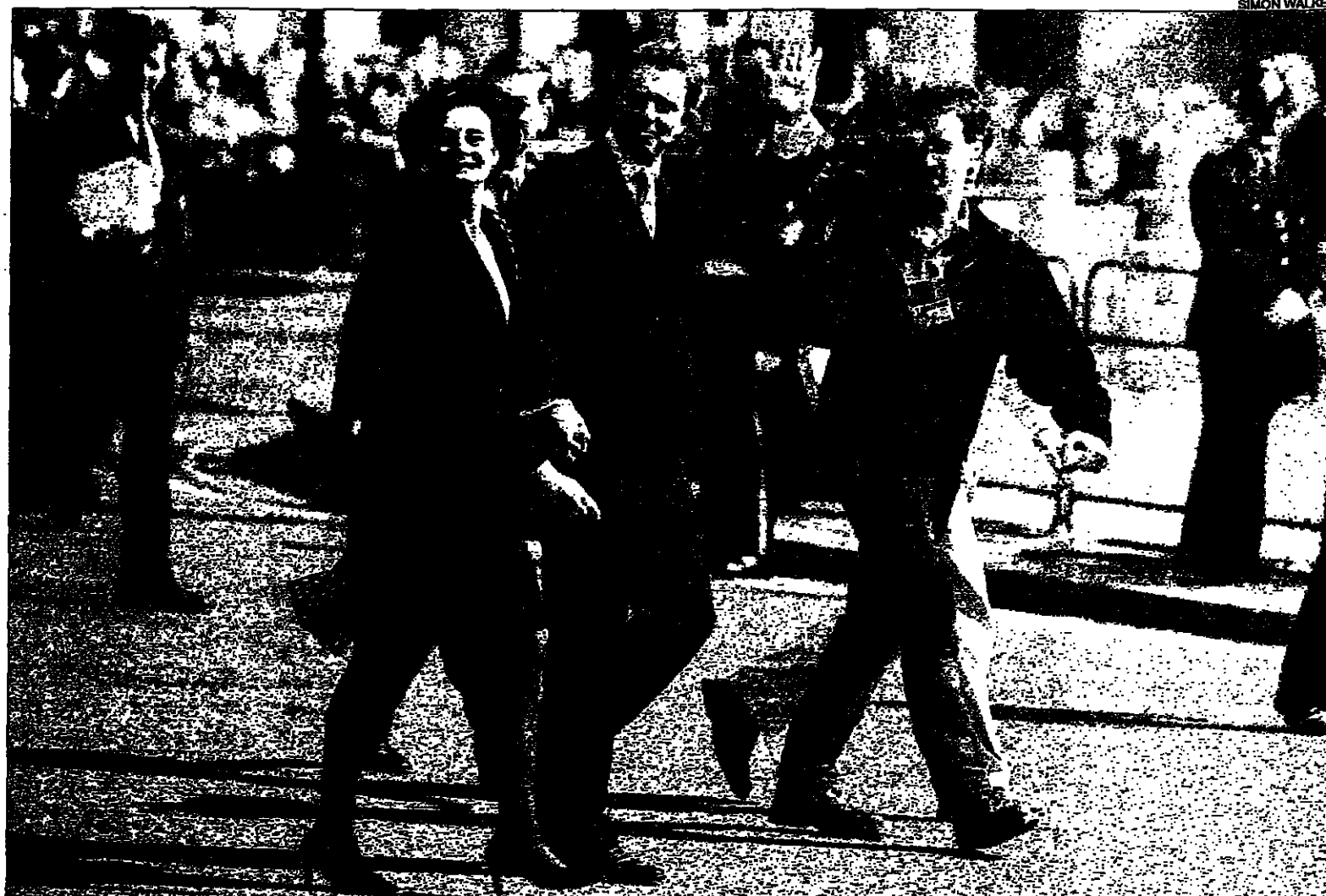
John Major, the Conservative leader, warned Mr Blair not to be too much of a man in a hurry, telling him that he should be careful how he used his substantial majority in the House of Commons. Mr Major also criticised the Bill giving independence to the Bank of England to set interest rates, telling Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, that it would be a decision he regretted.

He said that there was "a very great deal" in the Queen's Speech package that Conservatives could support, but he promised vigorous opposition to areas they thought were not in the national interest.

Twenty-two Bills were contained in the Speech, five more were signalled and there were three White Papers that eventually will lead to legislation.

Mr Blair said that they represented the "alliance of progress and justice too long absent from politics under Conservative government", adding: "Our mandate is clear: to modernise what is outdated and to make fair what is unjust, and to do both by the best means available, irrespective of dogma or doctrine and without fear or favour."

Highlights were the well-trailed plans to cut class sizes for five to seven-year-olds. Continued on page 2, col 5



Tony and Cherie Blair abandoned Downing Street's official limousine to walk to Parliament for the Queen's Speech ceremony yesterday

Pageant replaced by walk to Westminster

By JAMES LANDALE
POLITICAL REPORTER

A POPULIST note was introduced to the traditional pomp and pageant of the State Opening of Parliament yesterday when Tony Blair went on an unexpected walkabout on his way to the Palace of Westminster for the Queen's Speech.

As the Queen arrived in her gilded horse-drawn coach, the Prime Minister and his wife Cherie abandoned their official car for the short walk from Downing Street. Taking advantage of the tight security and the traffic ban in Whitehall, Mr and Mrs Blair shook hands with cheering members of the public.

The move, designed to boost

Mr Blair's image as a man of the people, which was carefully cultivated during the election campaign, has clear precedents in America, where the political walkabout first emerged as a campaign tool.

Such is new Labour's attention to detail that Mrs Blair

wore a scarf in the same way that Hillary Clinton, the US President's wife, wears hers, with a length hanging down from the left shoulder.

Mr Blair has clearly ignored a warning given by one of Mr Clinton's former senior aides earlier this week to avoid

becoming too populist. George Stephanopoulos, Mr Clinton's former right-hand man, told Labour MPs, officials and party strategists in London not to overdo the populism. He said Mr Clinton had suffered from "too much of the common touch" and had lost the

mystique that sustained governments in times of trouble.

Mr Blair's Westminster walkabout also echoed the walk down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington taken by former President Jimmy Carter and his wife Rosalynn after he was sworn in in January 1977.

Later Mrs Blair went on her own personal walkabout on the balcony inside the House of Lords, where she was to watch the Queen deliver her speech. Amid all the splendour of ermine-clad peers and their wives in extravagant gowns and tiaras, Mrs Blair chatted with the spouses of other senior Labour and Liberal Democrat figures as if she were attending a coffee morning.



American style: the Carters in 1977 set the style followed by the Clintons

"Listen, I've got this amazing new tax evasion scheme"

Fall in jobless

Unemployment dipped to a near seven-year low yesterday — as the new Government signalled moves to reform the way in which the monthly figures will be calculated. Page 25

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Supermarkets declare germ warfare

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

PRODUCTS with built-in bug control are about to appear on the shelves of two of Britain's biggest retailers.

Sainsbury's and Marks & Spencer yesterday announced deals to sell products impregnated with Microban, a disinfectant that can kill a wide range of bacteria and fungi, including those implicated in most food-poisoning scares.

The protection, to be added to products such as chopping boards, dishcloths, bin-liners, towels and bath mats, was described as a breakthrough in hygiene by Kevin McCarter, the marketing director of Sainsbury's.

While not replacing the normal rules of safe food preparation, he said that Microban added an extra layer of protection, killing more than 99 per cent of

bacteria, including listeria, salmonella, and E. coli O157.

It would be used in the company in its own food preparation areas, and sold in a wide range of products. The company's research, among customers, had shown an "overwhelming interest in this innovation". The new products will cost more than their conventional equivalents, but prices have yet to be fixed.

Microban International, the New York company behind the product, has agreed a deal with Sainsbury's for the next two years. It has struck a separate deal with Marks & Spencer, which is to launch an antibacterial range of towels and bath mats in its Shoreham and Camberley stores next week.

The active ingredient, Triclosan, made by Ciba, is

already used extensively in toothpaste and other toiletries. It can be incorporated into items made of plastic or man-made fibres during manufacture and is constantly replenished as molecules migrate to the surface from the interior of the plastic.

That means that even if a chopping board is stripped of its antibacterial properties by intensive cleaning, it quickly regains them as fresh molecules work their way to the surface. Sainsbury's says that protection should last the full lifetime of the article. In the case of towels and bath mats, protection is guaranteed for up to 50 washes.

Geoffrey Sprigall, the director of scientific services for Sainsbury's, said that there were now 100,000 reported cases of food poisoning a year

in Britain, a significant proportion caused by cross-contamination — using the same chopping board for raw and cooked meats, for example.

"Microban is not a substitute for proper hygiene," he said. "But Microban goes on working 24 hours a day, 365 days a year for the life of the product. We think it is a breakthrough in food preparation."

Sainsbury's will offer 60 products from September, ranging from plastic storage boxes to potato mashers. The company's tests showed that when a Microban-treated chopping board was infected with E. coli O157, the number of bacteria fell over 24 hours from 100,000 to 300. On an untreated board, numbers rose from 100,000 to ten billion over the same period.

Channel Tunnel repairs complete

Channel Tunnel repairs costing more than £50 million were completed yesterday, six months after the blaze that damaged more than 600 metres of tunnel. The completion means that journey times for the train and car shuttle services should return to normal. The freight service is expected to restart next month.

Rajiv Gandhi 'at heart of scandal'

Rajiv Gandhi, the former Indian Prime Minister, has been singled out as the key conspirator in the multi-million pound scandal involving the arms manufacturer Bofors. Mr Gandhi, who was assassinated in 1991, is named in a charge sheet prepared by India's Central Bureau of Investigation. Page 16

Laurie Lee dies in the village he immortalised

By ALAN HAMILTON

LAURIE LEE, the poet and author who immortalised Gloucestershire countryside in his autobiographical *Cider With Rosie*, has died at his Cotswold home, aged 82.

The writer, who underwent major abdominal surgery last year, had been unwell since Christmas. He died on Tuesday in the house he and his wife Kathy occupied in the village of Slad, near Stroud, where he was born in 1914 and to which he returned in his

later years. His wife and daughter, Jessy, his only child, were with him at the end.

Last year he helped in a successful campaign to prevent a developer from building 90 homes in Slad Valley, arguing that its landscape had remained largely unchanged for 1,000 years.

Last night fellow villagers mourned the passing of the man who put them on the literary map. David Tarratt, the publisher of the Woolpack Inn, next to Lee's home, said: "The village will never be the

same without him. He was such an entertaining man who always had time for visitors, who came to see him from all over the world. He had been very ill and had lost many of his faculties, although his mind was still sharp. His death was not a complete surprise, but it is still a very sad moment."

Despite several counter-claims, Lee took with him to the grave the identity of the heroine of his bucolic celebration of young love in *Cider With Rosie*.

He will be buried after a private funeral at his village on Tuesday, and his family are expected to announce a memorial service later.

Known to villagers as a man full of tricks and quips, Lee said shortly before his death that he dreamt of having a heart attack in Hatchards bookshop, an obituary by Ted Hughes, a memorial service at the Garrick Club and a drinking fountain in Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey.

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Lee helped to save valley

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Boothroyd bans Sinn Fein MPs from Commons

BY ARTHUR LEATHLEY AND NICHOLAS WATT

THE Sinn Fein MPs Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness are to be barred from using Commons facilities following their refusal to swear their allegiance to the Queen.

Betty Boothroyd, the Speaker, changed Commons rules in response to widespread condemnation of the MPs' announcement that they intended to make free use of offices, stationery and telephones.

Her ruling raised the prospect of a legal challenge by Mr Adams, the Sinn Fein president, and Mr McGuinness, the party's chief negotiator. Courts have been, however, reluctant to challenge Parli-

ment's right to set its own rules.

MPs who refuse to take the Commons oath were already barred from claiming a salary or allowances but had been allowed to use facilities at Westminster. Miss Boothroyd said yesterday that it would be "in the interests of the House" to extend the restrictions, clearing up an issue that had not been ruled on formally.

She said the Commons had "traditionally accommodated great extremes of opinion", but added: "I feel certain that those who choose not to take their seats should not have access to the many benefits and facilities now available in

this House without also taking up their responsibility as Members."

Under parliamentary rules, MPs who refuse to take the oath or affirmation can be fined £500 each time they sit or vote in the Commons and can be disqualified as MPs.

Miss Boothroyd said that from the end of the debate on the Queen's Speech, on Tuesday, the services available to MPs in the House "will not be open for use by Members who have not taken their seats by swearing or by affirmation". Her ruling will be incorporated in Erskine May, the parliamentary rulebook.

It was not immediately clear whether the two MPs would have access to the Commons before the new rules were introduced and they are planning to visit the Commons before Tuesday. Mr Adams said yesterday: "Myself and Martin McGuinness will be going there because there is a gap in our schedules and to pick up our passes."

"We will have a look around the place and get the feel of it. It is an historic building, I think we should acquaint ourselves with it. We intend to network and to meet and to lobby those who are interested in doing that with us."

He added: "I have a duty, as has Martin McGuinness, to represent my constituency. We gave a commitment that we will not take an oath to an English Queen."

Mr McGuinness said that a ban raised "very serious questions about the attitude of Parliament in relation to treating the people that I represent as second-class citizens. There may be legal avenues we would need to explore."

□ The Loyalist Volunteer Force, a breakaway terrorist group, was blamed yesterday for the shooting of a Roman Catholic father-of-six in Bellaghy, Co Londonderry, on Monday. The group, formed by hardliners who opposed the ceasefire, is also thought to have tried to shoot a delivery man yesterday in Milford, Co Armagh. A masked man approached the man, who is in his 30s, but his gun jammed.

Bruton goes for June 6 election

BY AUDREY MAGEE
IRELAND CORRESPONDENT



Bruton: hopes economy will bring him victory

THE Irish Prime Minister will dissolve parliament today and call a June 6 general election.

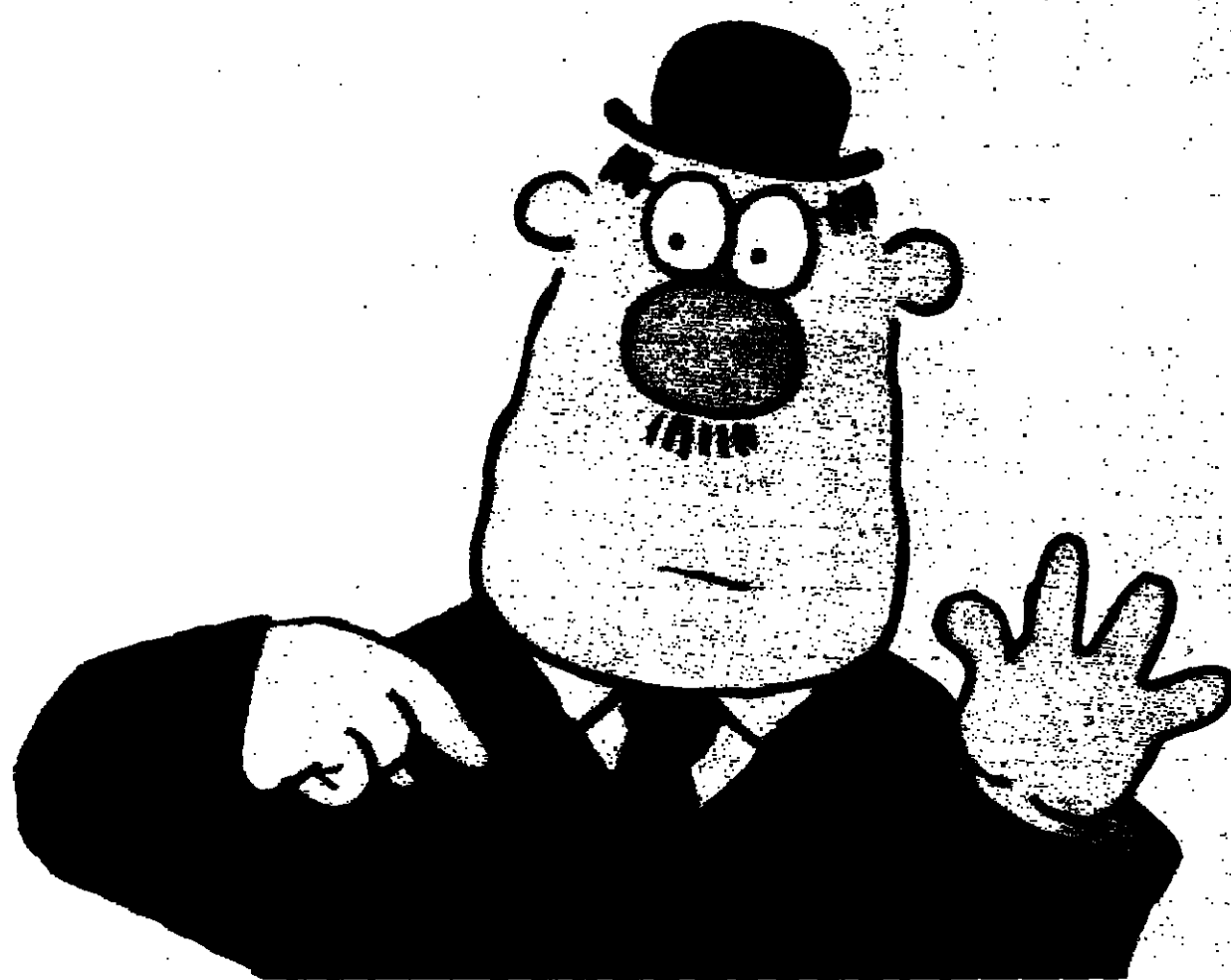
John Bruton is calling the election five months earlier than necessary in the hope that the buoyant economy will win his three-party coalition another five-year term. However, his scheme may not go according to plan as his centre-left coalition is trailing behind the centre-right opposition in the opinion polls.

Mr Bruton's Fine Gael party and his Labour and Democratic Left coalition allies face an uphill struggle to claw back a 12-point lead from the Fianna Fail and Progressive Democrat opposition parties. Both sides are admitting to the possibility of a hung parliament where small parties such as the Greens and independent candidates will be dragged into the fold to make up a majority.

The economy and crime are the issues of most concern to the voters, although sleaze in politics will also feature on the doorsteps. Ireland is one of the fastest-growing economies in the European Union and there

has been a steady decline in the unemployment rate, which has blighted the nation's economy for decades. Workers claim, however, that they are seeing little change in their wage packet.

Most want a cut in income tax from the present upper limits of 48 per cent and 21 per cent. Fianna Fail and the Progressive Democrats are offering cuts of up to 8 per cent over the next five years, bringing Irish tax levels in line with Britain. The government coalition is today expected to promise some cuts — although not as big as 8 per cent.



The cartoon Hector is portrayed as a bumbling bureaucrat, but the Plain English Campaign says he is a bully

In plain English, Hector, you are nothing but a tax terrorist

BY ALAN HAMILTON

HECTOR, the cartoon taxman with the Alec Guinness voice used by the Inland Revenue to publicise its new self-assessment system, is no bumbling bureaucrat, but rather a tax terrorist who sends out menacing letters to frighten the unwary, according to the Plain English Campaign.

Chrissie Maher, the director of the 25-year-old campaign, who has persuaded many government departments to abandon jargon and simplify their language in official forms and documents, accused the Revenue of terrifying people who were trying their best to understand the complex new system.

She made the claim after a supporter of her campaign passed her a letter from the Revenue's tax collection office in Stockport threatening legal proceedings, seizure of possessions and a court case.

Ms Maher said of the letter: "It doesn't mince words. It says 'Dear Madam', not even

using the person's name. It also says the first payment is due within seven days. Then it gets nasty."

"I warned people this would happen. The Inland Revenue has not waited long. Only a few weeks ago we saw bumbling Hector patronising us all and telling us how simple self-assessment was going to be. Now they are trying to frighten small businesspeople and individuals. It's tax terrorism."

The Revenue was unrepentant yesterday, saying that it had every right to start becoming "a little firm" when people were several months behind with their payments. A spokeswoman said of the letter in question: "We have been sending out letters like that for a long time. The payment is now three months late."

Officials said that there was no timescale of lateness for sending such letters. Collectors were more likely to send them if they had heard nothing from the taxpayer concerned in response to earlier, gentler reminders.

According to Ms Maher, who has produced her own version of a model taxman's letter, plain English is about communicating and using warm and courteous language as well as making things clear. The Revenue's threat was clear, but showed no warmth or understanding. "Instead of threatening, the letter should explain. It should acknowledge that

Dear Madam,
Self-assessment 1st payment overdue: £x
This includes interest to 7/5/97.
The total amount above is unpaid. Please pay it now unless you have done so within the last few days. You will find more information on the amount you owe and how to pay it on your Statement of Account.
If I do not receive your payment within 7 days I shall start legal proceedings to collect the amount due.
This could result in:
■ your possessions being seized, removed and sold at public auction, or
■ a court order or judgement against you.
It may also mean you have to pay costs.
Should you wish to discuss this matter further then please contact this office immediately.
You are reminded that interest is charged on late payments and this increases daily.
Yours sincerely (illegible signature)

Dear Mrs Smith,
The new Self-Assessment system has now started. Please send your first payment for £x. This includes interest from Date A to Date B.
If you have already sent your payment, I am sorry for troubling you. If not, please pay it now. You will find more information on the amount you owe, and how to pay it, on your statement of account.
If I do not receive your payment within seven days, I will have to start legal proceedings to collect the amount you owe. These proceedings could include:
■ your possessions being removed by a bailiff and sold at public auction, or
■ a court order being made against you.
You could also have to pay costs.
Obviously we do not want this to happen. If you have any questions, please contact me immediately at the number shown above. Please remember that we increase the interest you have to pay each day.
Yours sincerely, (printed name)

people are puzzled by self-assessment. It should tell them, politely but clearly, why their tax is due, and what the penalties are for being late."

She said that she was considering writing to Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, asking him to declare an amnesty for small taxpayers bamboozled by self-assessment.

Church survey rejects Prince

BY RUTH GLEDHILL

A SURVEY of readers of the Church of England Newspaper has found that 76 per cent do not want the Prince of Wales to become Supreme Governor of the Church of England.

More than 400 of the weekly tabloid's 11,000 readers responded to a questionnaire published in a March edition. One third of those were clergy, and two thirds men.

According to the survey, published in tomorrow's edition of the paper, two factors are behind the results: "Firstly, Prince Charles's admission of adultery and subsequent divorce. Secondly, his comments about being defender of faith rather than Defender of the Faith."

The largely evangelical readership could be expected to take that view, and the survey is unlikely to be representative of all churchgoers.

The Right Rev Michael Nazir-Ali, Bishop of Rochester, said: "Very often this kind of response is because there is a misunderstanding of what Supreme Governor means. It does not mean that Prince Charles would have any authority in areas of doctrine or worship or the moral aspect of the Church."

The Right Rev Colin Buchanan, Bishop of Woolwich, and the Church's leading advocate of disestablishment, said the standing of a particular monarch was not the central question.

Canon Michael Saward, of St Paul's Cathedral, said: "However, regrettable adultery may be in anyone's life, it has a long history in the British monarchy and to add one more adulterer to the list is hardly going to create a precedent."

Clergy urged to oppose gay lobby

A clergyman has begun a national campaign to counter what he calls "the growing threat of the gay lobby to the Church of England".

The Reverend Tony Higon, rector of Hawkehill in Essex, and founder of Action for Biblical Witness to our Nation, has written to each of the 10,000 full-time clergyman and women in the Church, urging them "to take simple but effective action to stem the tide of the gay lobby", and warning them that churches could be prevented from refusing to appoint clergy who are practising homosexuals.

Mr Higon's intervention represents a growing body of opinion on the evangelical and traditionalist wings of the Church. There is growing dissension within the Anglican Church over the issue.

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Woolwich Prime Gold (Instant Access)	1.00% [†]	2.00%	2.00%	2.25%	3.00%	3.50%	3.75%	3.75%
TSB Flexible Savings Account (Instant Access)	0.50%	2.60% ^{††}	2.60%	2.75%	3.20%	3.65%	3.75%	3.75%
Halifax Liquid Gold (Instant Access)	0.50% [‡]	2.45%	2.65%	2.95%	3.25%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%

All rates quoted are gross* and correct as 13th May 1997. Source: Moneyfacts. *Rate effective from £50. †Rate effective from £2,000.

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Shake-up

Continued from page 1

using funds from the scrapping of the assisted places scheme; a drive to push up education standards, including the closure of failing schools; an end to the internal market in the National Health Service and an attempt to attract more private funds into the NHS; the use of mid-week lottery profits to finance extra health and education projects; faster sentencing for young thugs; the establishment of a low-pay commission to fix a national minimum wage; and a ban on all handguns.

Left out were proposals to reform the Lords, expected in the second Labour session, and plans to give unions recognition rights.

Tradition was maintained in the ceremonial accompanying the Queen's procession from Buckingham Palace to Westminster to deliver the new Government's programme in the House of Lords.

But the tone of change was apparent in her address, which is written by ministers. There was an instantly political flavour in her first words on the direction of the programme: "My Government intends to govern for the benefit of the whole nation. The education of young people will be my Government's first priority."

Then there were commitments to high and stable levels of employment, a fundamental attack on youth unemployment as well as on long-term unemployment and the first national housebuilding programme for well over a decade.

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Care home staff brutalised mentally ill residents

BY A STAFF REPORTER

A FORMER nursing home director and two colleagues were convicted yesterday of ill-treating mentally handicapped residents in two private homes at which the regimes were said to be more like Army camps than nursing homes.

Residents were slapped, their hair was pulled and they were denied lavatory paper, toothpaste and soap. One woman with Down's syndrome was made to eat her meals outside, even in the rain, and another was dragged down stairs by her hair.

An inquiry by Buckinghamshire County Council in 1994 unearthed a catalogue of sexual and physical abuse committed by Gordon Rowe, who ran Stoke Place Mansion House and Stoke Green

House, both in Stoke Poges, with his wife, Angela, Gordon Rowe, who killed himself in his car in March last year, would have faced charges of being principally responsible for cruelty at the homes, police said.

Former Detective Superintendent Jon Bound, of Thames Valley Police, who investigated the abuse allegations, said what went on at the homes was "absolutely appalling. Out of 70 residents in the homes, there were allegations of abuse involving 40 of them."

"Mr Rowe was sexually abusing female residents as well as physically assaulting men and women. Had he been in court today, he would have been charged with a number of counts of rape, indecent



Desmond Tully, left, Angela Rowe, centre, and Lorraine Field were all convicted of mistreating patients in their care

assault and ill-treatment." Angela Rowe, 39, was not present as a jury at Kingston Crown Court took 21 hours to find her, Desmond Tully and Lorraine Field guilty of mistreating patients in their care. Rowe was not fit to attend after

collapsing on Monday, when she was found guilty of neglecting two patients.

Gary Moreton, a care worker, had broken down in tears as he told the court of handicapped residents being turned into shadows by the

harsh regime. Mr Moreton said that one man, Michael Smith, had begged on his knees not to be forced to work in the garden in all weathers, which prompted Gordon Rowe to lock him in his room for up to five days at a time.

Mr Smith had been "a bubbly young man, full of enthusiasm and always extremely happy and excited about life" when Mr Moreton first met him. But by the end of Mr Moreton's three years at the homes, "he was totally wrecked".

Relatives of some of the victims said that they would pursue civil action for damages against Buckinghamshire County Council. Pauline Hennessey, 35, sister of one of the residents, Janet Ward, said she was outraged that Miss Ward had been referred to as violent and aggressive throughout the trial.

She said: "She was raped, abused, ill-treated and neglected. She went straight to Stoke Place from convent school and died within two years of leaving the home."

Stephen Morris, a psychotherapist who treated some patients after the revelations of ill-treatment, said: "These people are the most severely traumatised I have ever had to deal with in all my years of professional practice."

Angela Rowe was convicted of two charges of ill-treating residents and two of wilfully neglecting residents. Tully, 33, of Exeter, described as effectively the manager of Stoke Place for several years, was convicted of one charge of mistreating a patient and cleared on two others. Field, 42, a senior care supervisor, was convicted of three charges of ill-treating resi-

dents. All had denied the charges. Buckinghamshire County Council said yesterday that it had acted quickly and firmly. Audrey Bainbridge, chairman of the social services committee, said: "The prime role of social services has always been to protect the residents' welfare and I'm proud of the way we did that. The question of prosecution and punishment is one for the police and the Crown Prosecution Service."

"I'm proud of the way our inspectors carried out an intensive and determined investigation and succeeded in uncovering a catalogue of allegations. We chose to take instant action by insisting on an immediate change of management and demanding an extensive list of improvements at the home. I'm convinced that was right."

Culture clash of race steward and the TV executives

BY RICHARD EVANS, RACING CORRESPONDENT

TELEVISION executives have made a formal complaint about "outrageous arrogance and extreme discourtesy" shown by a racing official at a half-hour meeting. One of the executives was told to take his hand out of his pocket and both were told to remain standing.

The complaint about the attitude displayed by John Jenyns, the chairman of the York panel of stewards, is being lodged with the Jockey Club over the way he treated John Fairley, a former managing director of Yorkshire Television, and Andrew Franklin, the producer of Channel 4 racing.

Mr Fairley and Mr Franklin met Mr Jenyns and three of his colleagues in the stewards' room at York racecourse on Tuesday evening to discuss their refusal to allow a mini-camera into the parade ring.

Mr Franklin said: "After introducing ourselves, I asked if they minded if we sat down. Mr Jenyns said: 'No. You will remain standing.' He then gestured to John Fairley and said 'and you will take your hands out of your pockets.'"

Mr Fairley said that Brooke Holliday, chairman of the York race committee, apologised yesterday. Mr Franklin added: "Jenyns' behaviour was contemptuous and quite unbelievable."

After considering the arguments put forward by Fairley and Franklin, Jenyns and his colleagues yesterday confirmed the ban on mini-cameras. Mr Jenyns is known as Mr Racing in York, where his extensive knowledge of the racing world is highly respected.

He refused to discuss the matter last night. He said: "Stewards are not allowed to comment."

Eddery rather than just Eddery. Clearly there has been no progress since then.

"In my letter to Sir Thomas, I said that in a world where the governance of racing and its finances is clearly going to be on the agenda of the incoming government, issues that affect the betting public's money can no longer be decided in secret by people whose behaviour is no longer in keeping with the way the rest of us conduct our lives in the 1990s. They must look at it urgently."

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John Jenyns remain standing and "take your hands out of your pockets"

Owner must pull down new wall at old rectory

BY FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

A MAN who tore down the simple stone wall around his listed home and erected an ornate entrance with remote-control gates was told by the High Court yesterday to demolish his handiwork and restore the boundary to its original state.

Deputy Judge George Bartlett, QC, upheld a Department of the Environment ruling that the wall built by Eric Norman around his 19th-century home, a former rectory, was alien to the village's historic character.

Mr Norman built new boundary and garden walls and installed a remote-control cast-iron gate without planning permission at his home, Normanton Grange, in Normanton le Heath, Leicestershire.

In May 1995 North West Leicestershire District Council ordered him to demolish his work and restore his home to its traditional appearance.

Yesterday Judge Bartlett said Mr Norman had neither appealed against nor complied with the council's enforcement notice but had put forward proposals that only differed "in matters of detail" from what he had already built.

The council refused planning consent, saying the proposals would undermine the

character of the village and clash with the 14th-century listed church that adjoined Mr Norman's property. The council condemned the new gate as "over-ornate".

Undeterred, Mr Norman appealed to a DoE planning inspector who agreed with the council that the development was "architecturally dominant" and alien to the simple design of other buildings along Normanton le Heath's main street.

While not accepting the council's claim that the wall Mr Norman had demolished was 400 to 500 years old, the inspector said it had probably been "a simple vernacular stone wall" without any special architectural merit, but still of "historical interest".

Mr Norman claimed all walls looked stark to begin with and his new wall would in time merge in with its surroundings. He was treating it with a mixture of "foul-smelling liquids" to encourage moss and lichen-growth.

Kray 'was lynchpin in £39m drug deal'

BY STEWART TENDLER

CHARLIE KRAY, the elder brother of the Kray twins, was yesterday accused of being the lynchpin in a multi-million pound drug deal. He was arrested by undercover police officers after allegedly offering to supply cocaine with a street value of up to £39 million to a detective.

A jury at Woolwich Crown Court in southeast London was told that Mr Kray acted for both suppliers and buyers. He was careful never to be present when the drugs were passed because he was too well-known as a member of the Kray family. In a secretly taped discussion, Mr Kray said there were two many eyes on him.

Yesterday Mr Kray, 70, from Sanderstead, Surrey, denied offering to supply cocaine in June last year to the officer, who posed as a crooked businessman from Newcastle. Mr Kray also denied supplying two kilos of cocaine to undercover officers a month later.



Charlie Kray denies offering to supply drugs

Opening the prosecution case, John Kelsey-Fry told the court that Robert Gould, 39, from Wimbledon, south London, and Ronald Field, 49, from Raynes Park, south London, have already pleaded guilty to charges linked to the cocaine. Mr Field had pleaded to offering the drugs and both men had pleaded guilty to its supply. Mr Kelsey-Fry said Mr Kray was an "affable, slightly down at heel character much liked by his friends whose company is sought after at various functions. He amuses people with tales about the old days and the twins. The Crown alleges that behind this affable image is another side of his life."

The trial continues.

'Baddest boy' of pop jailed for 3 months

BY KATHRYN KNIGHT

THE soul singer Mark Morrison was jailed for three months yesterday for threatening a police officer with an electric stun gun.

Morrison, 24, who has had five top ten hits, shook his head as David Kennet-Brown, sitting at Marylebone Magistrates' Court, said he had no option but to send him to prison in view of his string of "horrendous" public order offences. Plans for a promotional tour of America, where Morrison's single *Return of the Mack* is number three, will have to be postponed.

Colin Nott, Morrison's solicitor, said the singer, who earlier this year described himself as the "baddest boy in pop music", took full responsibility for his actions. Mr Nott asked the magistrate to consider imposing community service rather than a prison sentence, which could ruin Morrison's career.

"He has worked very hard in establishing the position he now has in the pop music field... the bad-boy image of pop may go down very well in America but as far as England and Europe are concerned it is not an image he seeks to cultivate. It will destroy him," Mr Nott said.

The clang of the prison gates for him will affect his future. If he goes to prison, that will affect his situation relating to travel and professionally it will affect him seriously.

Morrison was arrested by police who thought he was trying to rob an all-night shop in Notting Hill, west London, last October. A plainclothes officer was in the shop at 4.30am when he heard a clicking noise behind him, turned and saw Morrison holding a stun gun.

day that the weapon could cause involuntary muscle contraction, pain, shock, a loss of balance and mental confusion. Morrison had argued that he did not know the stun gun was illegal and had bought it to protect himself from unwanted attention since he had become a public figure.

Mr Kennet-Brown told Morrison that any previous claims to good character had been ruined by "a horrendous record of public order offences". He ordered Morrison to pay £350 costs and imposed a destruction order in relation to the stun gun.

As Morrison was taken away to Wormwood Scrubs, where he is expected to serve his sentence, Mr Nott said he was considering an appeal.



Morrison: US tour will have to be postponed

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Book judges make revolutionary choice for £25,000 award

BY ERICA WAGNER, LITERARY EDITOR

THE judges of the NCR Book Award last night announced a surprise winner, Orlando Figes's *A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution 1901-1924*. Norman Davies's magisterial *Europe* had been the favourite for the £25,000 prize.

Mr Davies and the other two shortlisted authors, Antonia Fraser for *The Gunpowder Plot* and Frank McLynn for *Jag*, received £2,500. The 10th anniversary of the award was also a triumph for Dr Fige's publishers, Jonathan Cape: this is the fifth consecutive year that one of their books has taken the award.

A close battle over the winner was fought by the judges, the barrister and broadcaster Clive Anderson, the astronomer Dr Heather Couper, the *Times* columnist Nigella Lawson, the broadcaster Sarah Kennedy and David Taylor of the publishers Blackwell's. Mr Anderson, chairman of the judges, said of

A PEOPLE'S TRAGEDY
THE LIVES OF THE POOR IN AMERICA



the winner: "This is a brilliantly written account of the Russian Revolution which manages in a work of scholarship, to bring the ghostly events of this important world event vividly to life." Norman Stone, Oxford Professor of Modern History, has described Dr Figg as the leading historian of Russia of his generation. The award was given in London last night.

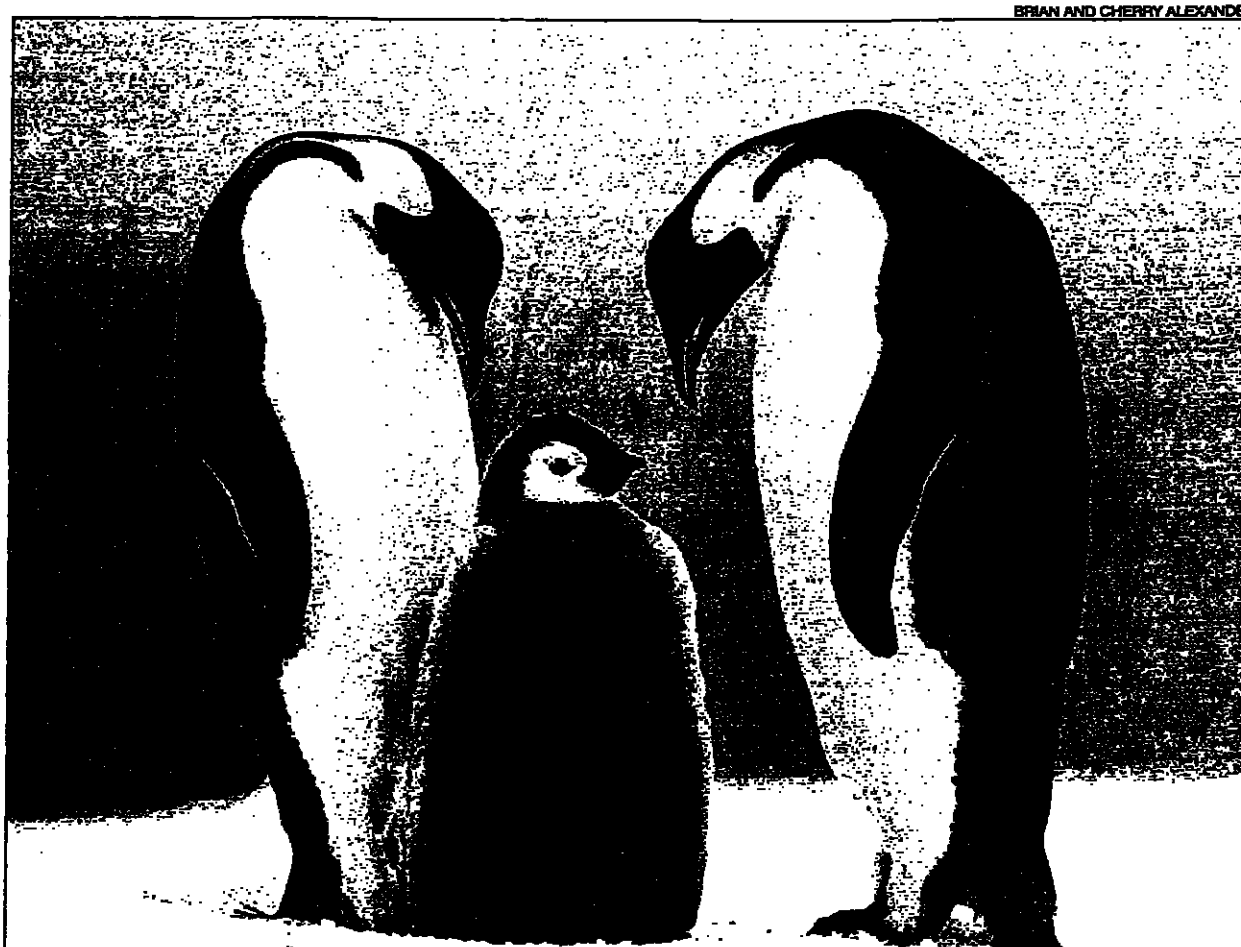
Richard Pines, an American

professor, made claims of a small number of similarities between Dr Figes's book and his own work. *The Russian Revolution*. Dr Figes refuted all charges of plagiarism, and other Russian experts were surprised to learn of the accusations.

□ A Spanish novelist who lectured at Oxford and wrote a fictional account of university life has won the world's largest literary prize for a single work of fiction. Javier Marias, will receive the £100,000 International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award for his novel *A Heart So White*.

Senior Marias, 46, won acclaim in Britain for his book *All Souls. A Heart So White* failed to generate public interest when it was translated into English two years ago. But Margaret Drabble, the author, who was one of the judges, described it as "a revelation".

Books, pages 38 and 39



Down in the dumps: Emperor penguins are thought to have caught the virus from rubbish discarded by tourists

Penguins pick up chicken infection

BY NIGEL HAWKES

ANTARCTIC penguins have fallen victim to a chicken disease, probably introduced by scientists or visitors carelessly discarding rubbish. The condition, infectious bursal disease, is carried by a virus and is common in poultry throughout the northern hemisphere.

Until now Antarctic penguins have been protected by their remoteness, but increasing human activity in Antarctica may be bringing that to an end, say Dr Heather Gardner and colleagues at the Australian Department of Environment, Sport and Territories. The effect of the virus, which particularly affects young birds, is to retard growth and make the Emperor and Adélie penguins susceptible to other infections. Mortality rates can be high. The likely cause is the careless disposal of infected chicken meat, which is then spread by scavenging birds such as the skua. The virus could also be on footwear or tyres contaminated by bird droppings.

'Top-tier' fence jailed for selling Rembrandt

BY PAUL W. HENSON

A HIGH-CLASS "fence" who sold a stolen £4 million Rembrandt to an undercover detective for £60,000 was jailed for nine years yesterday.

David Dudding was one of only a handful of "top-tier" receivers of top-quality stolen objects of art in the country. He was targeted by detectives investigating a spate of robberies from stately homes and galleries all over Britain.

During their ten-week operation, the police successfully introduced two undercover officers, posing as knowledgeable black-market buyers, to the gang of art thieves. It was a bold move, as the two officers had only been in the force a few weeks, and were inexperienced as hunters of art thieves. Vincent, which, long before Dudding, 51, from Newcastle, on six charges of handling stolen property after a three-week trial at Newcastle upon Tyne Crown Court.

William Lowe, QC for the prosecution, said Duddin handled a variety of expensive items including the Rembrandt painting *Portrait Of His Mother*, stolen from the Earl of Pembroke's home, Wilton House in Salisbury.

Crews pull together to revive Tyne boat races

By PAUL WILKINSON

TWO university rowing clubs will race head to head this weekend in a contest they hope will become the northern equivalent of the Oxford and Cambridge boat race.

Eights from Newcastle and Durham will row over an 1,800-metre course on the Tyne. "It would be ridiculous to suggest this will be a rival to the Boat Race, but we hope it will become another highlight on the sporting calendar," a Durham University spokesman said. It will be the first time the two universities have held such a race, although they have competed against each other at regattas.

They hope that the event, which will finish beneath the Tyne Bridge, will reawaken a former passion for rowing in the region that rivalled its current obsession with football. In the mid-1800s thousands would line the river to watch races between special adaptations of the keel boats used to unload coal on the Tyne. Prize-money was as high as £500 and thousands more were wagered.

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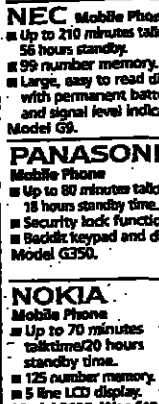


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Kline: craving dialogue

Most film scripts are dire says Kline

FROM DANA ALBERGE IN CANES

THE American actor Kevin Kline said yesterday that 98 per cent of modern film scripts were dire and that his craving for dialogue was generally satisfied only in the theatre.

Kline, at the Cannes Film Festival where his latest film, *The Ice House*, is having its premiere, said that his craving for dialogue was generally satisfied only in the theatre. "I have to read those scripts. I know by the sixth page that I'm not going to do it... I'm drawn to poetic drama."

This autumn Kline — who has starred in *Sophie's Choice* and *A Fish Called Wanda* — appears at New York Lincoln Centre in Chekhov's *Ivanov*. As an adviser to the Globe Theatre in London, he is also liaising with Mark Rylance, the artistic director, and hopes to appear on stage there. If he could choose any role, it would be Lear.

His views were echoed by John Hurt, one of Britain's most eminent actors. "It's always been difficult to find good scripts. I've never known a time when there was a plethora of them," he said. Standards had declined in a "literary way" in recent years. "Films have gone in a visual direction rather than a literary direction."

Hurt, who was in Cannes to promote his latest film, *Love and Death on Long Island*, said that it was more difficult to find good scripts in America than in Europe. Asked why agents were not sifting scripts before passing them on to clients, he said that they would not know a decent piece of writing. It was hard enough to find a good agent in America, let alone a good script.

An American film-music composer is planning to set up a foundation in Britain for underfunded schools to buy and repair instruments for pupils. Michael Kamen, whose foundation will donate about £160,000 a year, said: "If we can get instruments in kids' hands, we might keep weapons and drugs out of them. We might be able to introduce them to a world that will change their lives."

Nobody forced me to resign, says Royal Opera chief in swansong

As the wreckers move in to prepare for a £214 million refit at Covent Garden, rumour has it that the chief executive has been bulldozed out. Carol Midgley reports

GENISTA MCINTOSH spoke out for the first time yesterday to silence rumours that her resignation as the £90,000-a-year chief executive of the Royal Opera House had been forced on her after only four months in the job.

Ms McIntosh, 50, insisted there had been no friction between herself and Lord Chladington, the chairman. She said she had received "support, encouragement and personal kindness" from him.

But, in a letter to *The Times*, she makes no mention of the stress-related illness cited as the reason for her departure in an agreed statement from the Royal Opera House.

She says: "I am extremely dismayed by the speculation which has followed my resignation, and in particular at the entirely unfounded suggestion that there have been disagreements between the board and myself."

She stresses there were no such disputes, nor any conflict with the chairman. "On the contrary, I received enormous support and encouragement from him throughout my time as chief executive, for which I am deeply grateful, as I am for his personal kindness. The decision to leave was mine alone. The statement tells all there is to tell."

Rumours continued at Covent Garden yesterday.

where staff said they had noticed no sign of Ms McIntosh's illness, although some said she had lost weight. Many were planning a "Bring Back Jenny" campaign.

There has been a feeling close to mutiny since a third of the 800 staff were earmarked for redundancy in July, and a continuing union row over pay.

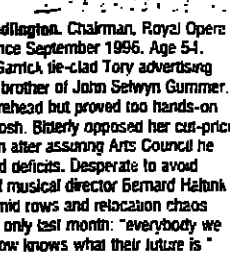
Some staff believe that Ms McIntosh was squeezed out in a dispute over Lord Chladington's hands-on role, and opposition to her plan to reduce ticket prices. Another theory was that the new Heritage Secretary, Chris Smith, planned to appoint a "Mehryn Bragg-like" figure to guide the House through its difficult months ahead. Mr Bragg backed the idea of a troubleshooter but added: "I haven't heard anything."

At the heart of the dispute lies a long-term battle between traditionalists and modernists for the soul of the Royal Opera House.

While Nicholas Payne and Sir Anthony Dowell, the directors of opera and ballet, fret about how to stage productions during the enforced absence, key players such as Lord Chladington and Vivien Duffield are determined to keep the finances healthy by attracting key sponsors to popular, high-profile



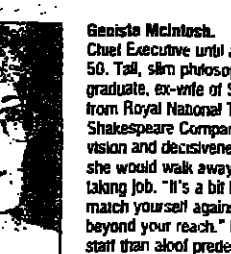
Lord Chladington, Chairman, Royal Opera House since September 1996. Age 54. Smooth, grey-haired Tory advertising guru and brother of John Selwyn Gummer. ROH figurehead but proved too hands-on for McIntosh. Bitterly opposed her cut-price ticket plan after assuming Arts Council he would be difficult. Desperate to avoid respected musical director Bernard Haitink retiring amid rows and relaxation chaos. Predicted only last month: "everybody we employ now knows what their future is"



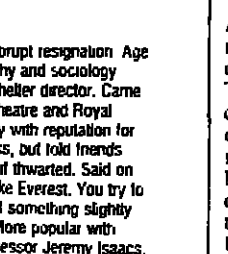
Vivien Duffield, Chairman Royal Opera House Trust. Age 50. Hugely powerful donor, fund-raiser and one of Britain's wealthiest women. French-educated heiress daughter of multi-millionaire businessman Sir Charles Clore. Diminutive but with immense presence and inspires fear among staff. Attracts much-needed funding from wealthy corporate and private donors from her tiny office within the ROH. A traditionalist, said to work closely with Keith Cooper.



Nicholas Payne, Director, Royal Opera. Age 52. Stoic, short clubbable Etonian brought from Opera North by Jeremy Isaacs. Enthusiastic opera buff's bluff. Leaders say did not get on with McIntosh but also believed to be unhappy in his position. Favourable experimental modern works over old favourites he dismissively terms "canary operas". Said to have more influence than his Royal Ballet counterpart Sir Anthony Dowell.



Mary Allen, New Chief Executive following hard upon McIntosh's departure. Tall, physically imposing former Secretary General of English Arts Council of England. Ex-actress, agent and arts management consultant, very experienced and articulate political player. Was on Arts Council with Lord Chladington when it gave £78 million to the ROH development scheme. Came under pressure, experienced administrator and friend of impresario Cameron Mackintosh but no experience of managing a theatre.



Keith Cooper, Director of Corporate Affairs. Shaven-headed telephone-throwing hatchet man who famously sacked hapless box office manager in front of a fly-on-the-wall TV crew. Claims to inherit pugaciousness from his Glaswegian father. Poached from English National Opera where he created the slogan "Everyone Needs Opera".



works. Lord Chladington yesterday denounced the claims of animosity as having been made by "mendacious trouble-makers." He added: "She told me a few weeks ago that she was unwell."

"I had worked with her quite carefully to help her

through but on Tuesday last week she said she was unable to continue with the job. It is totally untrue to say there was friction between us. She was my first choice. I have nothing but praise for her."

At Ms McIntosh's home in north London, her son, Alex-

ander, said she had gone to stay with friends. Asked how she felt about her departure from the Royal Opera House, he said: "She feels fine but I am saying nothing. I don't want to say anything about it. I don't know whether she is angry about suggestions she

was suffering from stress, but she is okay."

Additional reporting by Dominic Kennedy, Stephen Farrell and Tim Jones

Leading article, page 21
Letters, page 21
Review, page 34

Stage by stage, the drama unfolds behind the scenes at Covent Garden

SUMMER 1996: after lengthy deliberations, gossip and many false alarms, enter Genista McIntosh, who is named as the new broom to sweep away all the rubble of the chaotic past few years at the Royal Opera House.

A popular executive director of the Royal National Theatre, she will be given the title of chief executive, taking over from Sir Jeremy Isaacs.

Sir Jeremy's reign had become synonymous with controversy, including the broadcast of unforgiving fly-on-the-wall television documentary *The House*. Staff protests over job cuts, dark rumblings about money problems and the resignation of the finance director, Clive Timmins, due to ill-health.

Worst of all, 320 redundancies have just been announced, to take effect in July 1997 as the House

closes for 2½ years. The omens for Ms McIntosh are less than good.

In an open letter in BBC Music Magazine, Sir Jeremy pitifully advises her not to take the job: "You know as well as I do Mr Punch's advice to those who marry — don't. But it is too late now — you are committed."

She concedes that she will be drinking from a "poisoned chalice" but insists: "If it doesn't work, I'll walk away."

On January 6, 1997, she takes over. If there are any problems, help is always at hand.

Lord Chladington, chairman of the Opera House since March, brother of John Selwyn Gummer — and in a previous role, Peter Gummer, the wily public relations guru — has an office just along the corridor where "Jenny" can run for assistance...

JANUARY 1997: Ms McIntosh is thrown in at the deep end. Squabbles break out in the Opera House management over whether to find a permanent base for the Royal Ballet and the Royal Opera to perform during their years of homelessness, or whether they should move around various temporary venues.

It is agreed that they should roam. The Barbican, the Royal Festival Hall and Lahti's Apollo in Hammersmith are among the short-term addresses.

Enter Lord Gowrie, chairman of the Arts Council, which gave £78 million in lottery money towards the redevelopment of the ROH, sparking a row that punters on council estates were paying for the pastimes of the elite. Gowrie describes the accommodation plans as "shambolic". Backstage, unrest is

growing over claims for touring allowances for working in temporary venues. To the chagrin of the audience, some of whom have paid three figures for a ticket, many performances begin late because stage hands are working to rule.

Full industrial action threatens to bring down the curtain altogether and ACAS is brought in to arbitrate.

Ms McIntosh comes up with the bright idea that ticket prices should be cut dramatically to end the image of the Royal Opera and Ballet as the Establishment at play. At her old home on the South Bank, such a scheme would be warmly admired. At the old Opera House, the suggestion of increasing the proportion of proletarian posteriors on seats is greeted with horror. It will, she is warned, lead to hideous financial deficits.

SPRING 1997: according to Lord Chladington's recollection, Ms McIntosh approaches him and says she is feeling unwell. Loyal and kindly, he tries to help her through her problems but, by May 6, it is all too much. With the help of Keith Cooper, director of corporate affairs, Lord Chladington attempts to persuade her to stay but she insists her health must come first.

At an emergency board meeting that night, Mary Allen, secretary-general of the Arts Council of England, is secretly picked as the new chief executive. On Wednesday, the first public clue that something may be wrong appears in a newspaper interview with Ms McIntosh. Asked whether she enjoys her job, she replies: "It's enormously exciting but sometimes it's hard to keep up."

On Sunday May 11, she

attends a recital by Pavarotti at the Royal Albert Hall. She spends much of the following day agreeing a press statement with her chairman announcing that she is leaving the post after four months in the job.

On the Tuesday, Lord Chladington and Keith Cooper are hauled as they tell the assembled musicians, stage hands and front of house staff that she is leaving. Everybody in the arts world is amazed to hear that she has health problems. Conspiracy theories abound. Some say she was pushed because of friction with her chairman or with Nicholas Payne, the director of the Opera House. Others say she had had enough.

In an attempt to silence the rumour mill, Ms McIntosh composes a letter to *The Times* from her hiding place with friends.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Research finds cell flaw behind lung cancer

American scientists have identified the flaw that allows lung cancer to develop in smokers. The smoke causes damage to cells, but machinery exists to detect this damage and put it right. Only when this enzyme-based repair mechanism is damaged does cancer occur, the researchers from Harvard University report in *Current Biology*. Those who smoke for a lifetime without developing cancer may, therefore, simply be those lucky enough never to lose the repair enzyme in any of their lung cells.

New bat found

A new species of bat has been discovered in disused stables near Antrim by a team from The Queen's University of Belfast. The discovery of the colony of *Nathusius's* pipistrelle, common in the Baltics, brings to 15 the known number of species in Britain.

Aids evidence

A British woman dying of Aids will travel to Cyprus next week to give evidence against the man she accuses of infecting her. Jeanette Pink, 44, a mother of two, will tell a court in Larnaca that Pavlos Georgiou, a fisherman, did not tell her that he carried HIV.

Girl power

The Spice Girls have become the first British group in 15 years to top the American charts with a debut album. More than 2.5 million copies of *Spice* have sold in the United States in the past two months, contributing to worldwide sales of 12 million.

Sea sickness

A yacht taking part in the BT Global Challenge made an emergency stop after a crew member developed acute appendicitis. Andrew Pilkington, 37, a sailor on *Heath Insured II*, fell ill about 170 miles east of St Helena and is now in hospital on the island.

Medical stress

A counselling helpline for doctors received more than 3,300 calls in the first year. More than a third dealt with emotional problems of anxiety, stress and depression. Almost half were at night and the average call lasted 33 minutes.

Forced change

The Society of High Constables in Edinburgh, originally a volunteer police force but now a ceremonial organisation, voted to admit women for the first time in 385 years. Edinburgh council had threatened to sever links if women continued to be excluded.

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Priority given to Blunkett's plans to raise standards

By JOHN O'LEARY
EDUCATION EDITOR

EDUCATION

MEASURES to raise standards in schools, colleges and universities have top priority in the Blair Government's first legislative programme.

A wide-ranging Bill, to be introduced by a White Paper next month, will include new powers for failing schools to be taken over, and faster procedures for incompetent teachers to be sacked. All schools will be required to set improvement targets.

Among the most delicate tasks facing David Blunkett, the Education and Employment Secretary, will be to abolish grant-maintained schools and find a new role for education authorities. The Queen's Speech promised a new framework for decentralised and equitable organisation for schools.

Labour has outlined a new structure for state schools, with three different categories. In the first, authority schools would become community schools, one associated with church or charitable bodies would be known as aided schools, and grant-maintained schools would be offered the halfway house of "foundation" status. Local authorities would oversee admissions policies for all three types, as well as providing central services.

In an interview with *The Times*, Mr Blunkett promised

to "look sympathetically" at grant-maintained schools' budget problems and to search for consensus on the arrangements. "We have made clear that we will want to have detailed discussions and proceed in a way that does not threaten the delivery of the education service in those schools."

Ministers are aiming to produce a White Paper to test opinion on their education proposals before the end of the school year. There will be regional seminars on the proposals and expert witnesses will brief MPs when the Bill goes into committee.

The Bill will contain an enabling clause to allow the Government to reform the student loan system and introduce other changes prompted by Sir Ron Dearing's report in July on higher education. Labour said in opposition that students would be expected to bear more of the costs of their courses, although the party has opposed private tuition fees.

A substantial section of the Bill will be devoted to changes in the teaching profession, including the establishment of a General Teaching Council to regulate the profession and oversee the introduction of a compulsory qualification for head teachers.

School governors and local

authorities would be left to tackle the problem of incompetent teachers. Mr Blunkett said that existing dismissal procedures, which can take up to two years, must be accelerated in the interests of pupils, although teachers would retain the same employment protection as other employees.

The Bill will also see the Government's first moves to promote life-long learning. Labour has promised individual "learning accounts" to encourage adults to continue their education.

Teachers' leaders welcomed the high priority given to education, but were more cautious about some of the likely initiatives. David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said that the only glaring omission was a commitment to provide the resources needed to achieve higher standards.

Local authorities said they would not fear the introduction of improvement targets, which were already in common use. The Local Government Association said it would be seeking powers to intervene more quickly where schools were failing, rather than relying on "blaming and shaming" them.

Mr Blunkett had pressed for an emergency Bill to prevent independent schools offering assisted places for 1998. In the next few weeks, a Bill will be



First in line: schoolboys waiting outside Buckingham Palace yesterday morning to watch the Queen's carriage leave for Parliament

introduced to phase out the £160 million assisted-places scheme and create a framework to transfer the savings to state primary schools to reduce class sizes for five, six and seven-year-olds.

Existing assisted places will be protected, including those to be taken up this September,

but preparatory school pupils are expected to lose state support when they transfer to senior schools. The scheme operates on three-year contracts, which will be revoked when the measures are enacted. Independent-school associations are waiting to see the proposals in detail before

deciding whether to undertake a legal challenge.

Jackie Lang, the headmistress of Walthamstow Hall School, in Kent, and vice-chairman of the independent schools' committee on assisted places, said: "We don't want to get off on the wrong foot with Labour because we have been

heartened by the talk of building bridges between the sectors. But clearly we want to make sure that any Bill is correct."

The abolition of assisted places is one of Labour's longest-standing education policies, and schools with a high proportion of assisted

places have long been planning to bridge the funding gap.

Experts are divided over whether the savings will be enough to fulfil the Government's pledge to reduce class sizes to a maximum of 30 in the first three years of primary school within five years.

Dixons DEAL 97

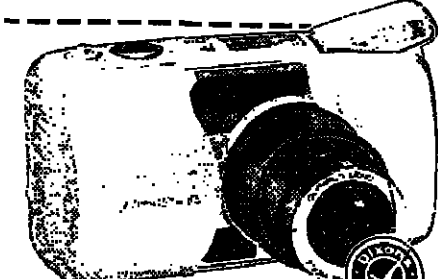
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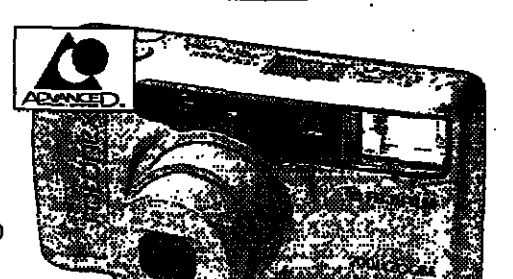
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HALF PRICE

'For the benefit of the whole nation'

This is an edited text of the Queen's Speech to Parliament yesterday.

My Government intends to govern for the benefit of the whole nation.

The education of young people will be my Government's first priority. They will work to raise standards in schools, colleges and universities and to promote life-long learning at the workplace. They will cut class sizes, using money saved as a result of phasing out the assisted places scheme.

A further Bill will contain measures to raise educational standards, develop a new role for local education authorities and parents, establish a new framework for the decentralised and equitable organisation of schools, propose reforms to the teaching profession, and respond positively to recommendations from the National Committee of Inquiry into the future of higher education.

The central economic objectives of my Government are high and stable levels of economic growth and employment, to be achieved by ensuring opportunity for all. The essential platform for achieving these objectives is economic stability.

To that end a Bill will be introduced to give the Bank of England operational responsibility for setting interest rates, in order to deliver price stability and support the Government's overall economic policy, within a framework of enhanced accountability.

My Government will also ensure that public borrowing is controlled through tough fiscal rules and that the burden of public debt is kept at a stable and prudent level.

They will aim to deliver high and sustainable levels of growth and employment by encouraging investment in industry, skills, infrastructure and new technologies by reducing long-term unemployment, especially among young people; by promoting competition; and

by helping to create successful and profitable business.

My Government has pledged to mount a fundamental attack upon youth and long-term unemployment and will take early steps to implement a welfare-to-work programme to tackle unemployment, financed by a levy on the excess profits of the privatised utilities, which will be brought forward in an early Budget.

A new partnership with business will be at the heart of my Government's plans to build a modern and dynamic economy to improve the competitiveness of British industry. They will bring forward legislation to reform and strengthen competition law and introduce a statutory right to interest on

late payment of debts. My Government is committed to fairness at work and will introduce a national minimum wage.

Legislation will be brought forward to amend criminal law and to combat crime, including reform of the youth justice system and measures against anti-social behaviour. A Bill will be introduced to prohibit the private possession of handguns.

My Government will improve the National Health Service, as a service providing care on the basis of need to the whole population. They will bring forward new arrangements for decentralisation and co-operation within the service and for ending the internal market.

A Bill will be introduced to incorporate into United Kingdom law the main provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights. Legislation will be introduced to allow the people of Scotland and Wales to vote in referendums on my Government's proposals for a devolved Scottish Parliament and the establishment of a Welsh Assembly.

Legislation will be introduced to provide a referendum on a dirty elected strategic authority and a directly elected mayor for London. A Bill will be brought forward to establish regional development agencies in England outside London.

In Northern Ireland, my Government will seek reconciliation and a political settlement which has broad support, with the Irish Government.

In the European Union, my Government will take a leading role. It will seek to promote employment, improve competitiveness, complete the single market and opt into the Social Chapter. They will seek further reform of the Common Agricultural Policy to secure lower food prices for consumers and save money, support the rural economy and enhance the environment.

They will set changes to the Common Fisheries Policy to conserve stocks in the long-term interest of the UK fishing industry. They will play a full part in the debate about economic and monetary union.

My Government has established a Department for International Development. They will publish a White Paper setting out how, through more coherent policies, they will tackle global poverty and promote sustainable development. They will rejoin the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

My Government will seek to restore confidence in the integrity of the nation's political system by holding the highest standards of honesty and propriety public life. They will consider how the funding of political parties should be related and reformed.

Other measures will be laid before you.

My Lords as Members of the House of Lords, I pray that the blessing of Almighty God may rest upon your counsels.

Sport sponsorship in danger

By IAN MURRAY
MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

SPORTS sponsorship is likely to be restricted or banned by the Government as part of draft legislation to be introduced this summer ending advertising by tobacco companies.

This will be a key element in a drive to reduce smoking, a habit which kills an estimated 100,000 people a year in Britain and three million worldwide. Tobacco companies spend £8 million on sponsorship and an estimated £90 million on advertising annually in Britain.

Tessa Jowell, Minister for Public Health, said: "We will

need to look carefully at how to remove tobacco advertising from sporting events without creating any risk to those events in the UK."

She said a range of measures was needed to reduce smoking, especially the rate at which young people were taking up the habit, which was the greatest single preventable cause of death and disease.

The Government is to organise a seminar of British and international experts to formulate a policy for a 'White Paper by the summer'. Professor Gordon McVie,

Director General of the Cancer Research Campaign, said advertising to young people to start smoking. "Six to 8 per cent of the smoking population start because of it," he said, "and more girls are starting to smoke as a stunning tool. There is an exponential growth in the number of young people dying of cancer."

Clive Tignor, spokesman for the Tobacco Manufacturers' Association, said the industry was ready to move where it was. "There is no evidence that advertising persuades people to smoke," he said. "All it does is persuade smokers to change brands."

First Bill of Rights since 1688 will give courts new powers

By FRANCES GIBBS, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

BRITONS will be able to apply directly to the courts to enforce their rights under the new Bill of Rights for 30 years.

The Bill will strengthen the powers of the courts by incorporating the European Convention on Human Rights into domestic law, enabling them to hear human rights cases. Strongly backed by the senior judges, the Bill would give the courts power to test British law against the European Convention on Human Rights and ensure these comply with the convention.

In effect, the Bill extends the courts' jurisdiction to cover any decisions by government bodies alleged to infringe the guaranteed rights in the convention, such as the right to a fair trial, to family life, privacy or freedom of expression. For individuals, the benefit would be that they could take allegations of abuse of human rights to the courts this country, instead of having to go to Strasbourg.

The United Kingdom has one of the worst records for adverse rulings by the European Court of Human Rights and the new Bill could mean that perhaps 50 per cent of those cases will be decided in Britain rather than Strasbourg.

Jack Straw, Home Secretary, said yesterday: "Just incorporation of the convention into the law of the United Kingdom would be a huge advance for human rights. It would be the first time that legislation over all of Britain has been brought before parliament since 1688."

The key question framing legislation is whether the judiciary will have power to strike down Acts of Parliament, or whether parliament would preserve sovereignty. That depends on which model is adopted. The one most likely to resemble the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990.

That Bill is inconclusive.

five than that used in Canada — originally favoured by Labour — and more likely to win support from those who fear that such a Bill would give judges too much power. The architect of the model is Lord Lester of Herne Hill, QC, who has campaigned for the incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights for nearly 30 years.

Two years ago he promoted a Private Member's Bill, along more radical lines, which failed. His original Bill would have empowered courts to strike down Acts of Parliament that conflicted with the European Convention.

He has drawn up a revised version which he argues would be more certain of wide support in the Commons "in the current climate of concern about threats to parliamentary sovereignty". It would also win the judges' backing. Senior judges do not "have enthusiasm for new powers that would put them so directly at odds with the elected branch of parliamentary government".

Yesterday, Lord Lester said: "I have been campaigning for this reform for 29 years and I rejoice that this is now to happen. It is marvellous news for the people of this country."

Appeal rights for deportees

Immigrants facing deportation on the ground of national security will have the right of appeal to a new body, under a Bill bringing Britain into line with other European countries. The move follows an appeal to the European Court of Human Rights by Karanjit Singh Chahal over a decision to deport him to India. The European court ruled that his rights had been violated by the absence of a judicial involvement in testing "national security".

that a government returned with a landslide majority sets about limiting its powers as one of its first acts."

The leading human rights groups, Justice and Liberty, said they would favour a stronger version of the Bill. Anne Owers, director of Justice, said: "This Bill seems to put the courts in a double bind. They have to interpret the law as being compatible with the convention but they can't strike it down if it isn't."

Such a Bill would make very little difference to the way courts interpreted the law, she added, although she welcomed the fact that judges would be able directly to use the convention in developing the common law.

The chief elements of the Bill, which will cover government and public bodies but not private disputes, are expected to be:

□ Courts required to construe the meaning of statutes and the common law as being consistent with European Convention rights.

□ Where the law seems to be in direct conflict with the convention, cases will go to Strasbourg to be decided.

□ Ministers, civil servants and other public authorities to discharge the powers delegated to them by Parliament in a way consistent with the human rights convention.

□ If a minister introduces a Bill that appears to be inconsistent with convention rights, he or she would have to notify the Lord Chancellor and Speaker and explain why.

The Government is also proposing the creation of a Human Rights Commission with powers to advise and help law centres and specialist groups to bring test cases.

Ministers also plan to put into law a 1995 European directive requiring stronger data protection rules to be in place by October next year. The Data Protection Bill would bring in controls over manually held records. At present, such controls and rights of access apply only to files held on computer.

Anthony Lester, page 20



Carol Page, the British women's .22 pistol champion. A total handgun ban would end her hopes of attending a third Olympic Games

Pistols will be illegal by end of the year

By RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

HANDGUNS

PRIVATELY owned handguns will be outlawed by the end of the year after a government decision to extend the partial ban introduced after the Dunblane massacre.

The Commons will be given a free vote, but the size of Labour's majority means that a ban is now a foregone conclusion. The move would mean the end of pistol shooting as a sport.

The Prime Minister, who met Dunblane parents at Downing Street on Tuesday, is confident that the measure will pass comfortably. However, the Government expects strong opposition from some Conservative MPs and peers. Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, promised that a Firearms (Amendment No 2) Bill would be the Home Office's first priority and would be introduced "this side of summer".

It would propose a ban on all handguns of .22 calibre and below, which were excluded from the Conservative Government's Firearms Act. It is estimated that 40,000 small handguns would have to be destroyed as a result of the Labour Bill, in addition to

the 160,000 already scheduled for destruction. Campaigners against tighter gun laws pledged last night to renew their fight against a total ban, but they accept that they have virtually no chance of success. Graham Downing, spokesman for the British Shooting Sports Council, said: "Our view is that the legislation on the statute book is damaging enough. The measure being proposed will wipe out completely the sport of pistol shooting. It is disproportionate and unfair."

Carol Page, 48, a double Commonwealth bronze medalist at .22 pistol shooting, said that a ban would end

her hopes of competing in her third Olympic Games. "I am stunned. I have done nothing to warrant this. It has taken me two decades to get to Olympic standard. Even if I emigrate to a country where we would be able to use and hold pistols, there is hardly likely to be funding from the Sports Council to support a Great Britain pistol team."

Eileen Harrild, the Dunblane PE teacher who was the first to be shot in last March's massacre, said that a ban would be a lasting tribute to the 16 dead children and their teacher. "The rights of society to be safe must override the right to shoot."

Government land ban poses threat to 60 fox hunts

HUNTING

MINISTERS have begun moves to end hunting with hounds on land owned by the Forestry Commission and the Ministry of Defence, it emerged yesterday (Michael Hornsby writes). Unlike a general ban on hunting, this more limited move, which would severely disrupt nearly 60 fox hunts and force some to

close, would not require Parliamentary legislation. There was no mention of hunting in the Queen's Speech, but the Government undertook in its election manifesto to hold a "free vote" on whether all hunting with dogs

should be banned. This could be done through a Private Member's Bill.

The Forestry Commission confirmed yesterday that it had met Elliot Morley, the Minister for Fisheries and the Countryside, to discuss a ban and had been asked to submit a report on the implications for control of fox numbers.

Janet George, of the British Field Sports Society, said: "There would be grave consequences for about 36 hunts if they were denied access to Forestry Commission land. Many would have to reduce the number of days they hunted and some would have to close. If Ministry of Defence land is lost as well, another 22

packs would be badly affected."

Josh Stratton, who runs a 3,500-acre farm on Salisbury Plain, said: "Like many other farmers round here, I allow the Army to use my land for lightweight exercises. This is done out of sheer goodwill and that goodwill would evaporate if hunting were stopped."

Cash will be distributed more fairly

THE National Lottery will be operated on a non-profit-making basis when it contracts with Camelot in 2001 (Polly Newton writes).

Camelot made £75 million in pre-tax profits in its first year of business last year. Lottery money will be used to fund after-school clubs where children can take part in extra-curricular activities and do homework.

Funds will be channelled into training in computer skills for teachers and the creation of "health living" centres. Lottery profits will continue to pay for arts, sports, heritage and charity projects. Schemes mark the millennium will give Lottery money as part of it.

The National Lottery Bill will create a trust for the National Endowment for Science and the Arts help to put into practice innovative business ideas. The Government will also review the way lottery funds are distributed, to ensure that regions receive a proportionate share.

Shackles to be removed from councils' capital funds

By ALEXANDRA FREAN, LOCAL GOVERNMENT CORRESPONDENT

THE first big wave of public sector housing to be built or renovated for nearly two decades will follow the Government's decision to release £5 billion of local council capital for new homes.

Hilary Armstrong, the Minister of State for Housing and Local Government, said the move was designed to alleviate homelessness and provide new jobs.

The measure will require the redistribution of capital receipts from the sale of council houses in affluent areas, such as the London Borough of Bromley, to inner-city areas such as Birmingham and Newcastle, which have the greatest need for social housing.

Ms Armstrong hoped that local authorities would come forward with imaginative schemes for spending the money, either acting alone or in partnership with private companies or housing associations. "We will not be prescriptive... but it's the partnership route, giving a mix of housing types, that at

the end of the day brings the best results," she said.

Although some of the money from the capital receipts might be released before next year, Ms Armstrong does not expect to see massive sums invested in social housing for at least a year. Many local authorities are simply not used to spending such large amounts on housing.

John Perry, head of policy

at the Chartered Institute of Housing, said that a pooling of the funds available through the capital receipts would be necessary to ensure an equitable distribution.

"What will probably happen is that the affluent authorities, such as Bromley, which has around £200 million in capital receipts, will be able to spend about 25 per cent of the money. The remaining 75 per cent will remain frozen in their accounts. The spending power of that money will be pooled nationally and redistributed,

through credit approvals, to the authorities that need it most," he said.

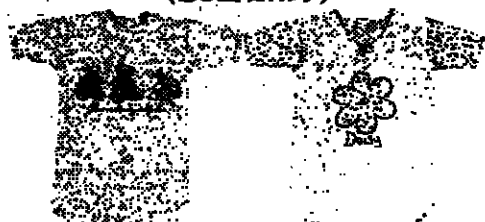
James Rebbeck, a spokesman for the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, estimated that the measure should release between £600 million and £800 million a year for the next five years.

"We think that will create 13,000 new jobs a year for the construction industry for each of the next five years," he said.

The supply of housing provided by the new money will not meet the predicted demand, however. It has been estimated that a further 4.4 million dwellings will be needed by 2016 to cope with the increase in single-person households. The social housing stock is thought to have a backlog of disrepair amounting to £20 billion.

A sum of £5 billion would buy 70,000 new council houses or flats, or 140,000 new housing association homes. Alternatively, it could cover the cost of renovating and upgrading 280,000 existing properties.

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Big ideas in a small space

Pledge not to deploy tactical nuclear weapons in Eastern Europe helps Russia to accept deal

Nato-Moscow pact clears path for alliance expansion

By ROBIN LODGE IN MOSCOW AND MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

NATO reached a historic agreement with Russia yesterday which cleared the way for Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary to join the alliance and guaranteed Moscow full consultation rights on all important security issues.

To the surprise of Javier Solana, the Nato Secretary-General and chief negotiator with the Russians, all the outstanding obstacles to a deal with the Kremlin were resolved at a meeting in Moscow with Yevgeny Primakov, the Foreign Minister.

Mike McCurry, the White House spokesman, welcomed the news and said the prospective agreement was something President Clinton had worked hard on. Mr Clinton met President Yeltsin of Russia in Helsinki in March to try to reach an agreement, but difficulties remained over the deployment of forces in new Nato member states.

Despite Moscow's public condemnation of Nato's plans to invite former members of the Warsaw Pact to join the alliance, the Russian negotiators were finally won over when Solana offered guarantees about the deployment of conventional forces east of the proposed Nato-Russia Act, which is expected to be signed by Mr Yeltsin in Paris on May 27.

includes a pledge by the alliance that it has no intention of stationing substantial forces permanently in the new member states.

The language of the text agreed in Moscow yesterday makes clear that Nato will develop infrastructure in the new member states to "suit the strategic environment". One senior Nato source said: "In other words, we have told the Russians that any new infrastructure will be purely to ensure inter-operability between the forces of the new member states and the rest of the alliance, and to provide facilities for rapid deployment, rather than stationing additional combat forces. The more infrastructure, the fewer troops we will need to deploy."

The Russian Foreign Ministry said that "very substantial progress" had been made at the talks. According to Nato sources, the Russians were finally impressed by the argument that Nato had no wish to start deploying divisions in

Poland or to base nuclear missiles in the new member countries. One source said: "We told them to look at Turkey and Greece and Norway as examples of Nato members where the alliance has not stationed substantial numbers of troops. The infrastructure, most of which will have to be paid for by the host nations, will be principally to do with improving air defence and creating basic facilities for rapid deployment."

The deal with Russia marks a personal triumph for Solana, 54, the former Spanish Foreign Minister who was mandated last December to try to negotiate a security agreement with Russia and to overcome Moscow's fears over Nato's planned eastward enlargement. He made clear from the start that, although he wanted a deal with Moscow, Russia did not have the right to veto Nato's plans to accept new members from Eastern Europe.

In six rounds of negotiations with Mr Primakov, who once was chief of Russia's foreign intelligence service, Solana persuaded Moscow that it stood to gain more by signing an agreement with Nato. Some Nato members had proposed including concessions on the deployment of nuclear and conventional forces in a separate document



Yevgeny Primakov, Russia's Foreign Minister, and Javier Solana seal their agreement yesterday to allow Nato's eastward expansion

attached to the main text. However, everything is to be contained in a single document which will form the basis of the new security partnership with Russia.

The document also outlines the proposed establishment of a Nato-Russia Council, a formal structure that will require both partners, in a reciprocal arrangement, to consult each other on all issues affecting the overall security of Europe.

The deal on conventional forces will be similar in tone and substance to the agree-

ment on nuclear forces, under which Nato has said it has no intention, plan or reason to deploy tactical nuclear weapons on the territory of new members. The senior Nato source said: "We don't need to and we don't want to. Building nuclear bunkers would be very expensive and the security environment makes this unnecessary, anyway. We can continue to rely on dual-capable tactical aircraft (based in Germany) and the sub-strategic capability of Britain's Trident missiles."

Throughout the negotiations with Moscow, Solana has been anxious to avoid the criticism of treating Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary as "second class" members of the alliance by offering Moscow too many concessions. However, Nato sources said that all the countries in Eastern and Central Europe which were queuing up for membership had been consulted. "You won't find any worried people in Warsaw; they know what's in the text of the agreement with Moscow,"

one Nato source said. Solana went to Moscow to meet Mr Primakov with a clear set of guidelines agreed by Nato's North Atlantic Council. Last night, after returning from the Russian capital, he briefed Nato ambassadors on the agreement.

Although the document is to be called a Nato-Russia Act, alliance sources said that it would not be legally binding like an international treaty — something the Russians had originally demanded — but would be similar to the Hel-

sinki Final Act, a declaration of political commitments which governs international human rights.

The proposed Nato-Russia Council is intended to provide Moscow with an effective and practical forum for consultation. The text of the agreement also allows for an exchange of liaison officers so that the Russians will have a permanent office at Nato headquarters in Brussels and at other command centres.

Leading article, page 21

30-year sentence for millionaire who murdered wrestler

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN IN NEW YORK

JOHN DU PONT, one of the wealthiest defendants in the history of American crime, has been sentenced to a maximum of 30 years' imprisonment for the murder of David Schultz, an Olympic gold medal-winning wrestler.

Prosecutors had sought the maximum 40-year term, arguing that Du Pont, whose fortune is estimated at \$250 million (£156 million), was "an extremely dangerous man of wealth, corruption, of power, self-centredness, desire and greed".

The defence and the prosecution, however, declared themselves "satisfied" with the outcome.

The state must now decide

whether Du Pont, 58, serves his time in jail or a mental hospital. He is a paranoid schizophrenic, and the Philadelphia jury which found him guilty of murder in February agreed that his mental illness had played a part in the shooting.

Du Pont has already served 15 months in a variety of prisons and institutions, and would be 70 years old before he became eligible for parole.

In an indication that he is more likely to be confined in a remedial institution than a prison, Patricia Jenkins, the judge, said: "As long as he lives, Du Pont's mental illness can never again be ignored."

The murder took place on January 26, 1996, when the millionaire fired several bullets into Schultz while the wrestler was repairing his car on the Du Pont estate.

Du Pont later barricaded himself inside his mansion for two days while he bargained over the telephone with police. He was arrested when he wandered outside.

After being sentenced, Du Pont offered a few words of remorse to the wrestler's widow and two young children. In his first public utterance since his arrest, he said: "I've fully concluded that on January 26, 1996, I was ill. I wish to apologise to Nancy Schultz and her children. I'm very sorry for what happened."

The murdered man, who won a gold medal at the Los Angeles Olympics in 1984, worked as an instructor at Du Pont's internationally renowned wrestling centre. The convicted man is the grandson of E. I. Du Pont, who in 1802 founded the chemical firm that bears his name.



Du Pont is led away after the court ruling

Gulf War study finds link to memory loss

Washington: New research has linked exposure to nerve gas with memory loss, one of the disorders suffered by Gulf War veterans, the Pentagon said yesterday (Ian Brodie writes). Rats injected over two weeks with low levels of the family of chemicals that includes the nerve gas sarin and many pesticides suffered brain damage similar to that in people with memory loss. The Pentagon described the findings as important, but said it was too early to draw firm conclusions. More than 20,000 US troops may have been exposed to nerve gas after the war when an Iraqi ammunition dump was blown up.

Release of the research follows the British Government's announcement this week that it will approve new research projects to try to determine the causes of multiple health problems known as "Gulf War syndrome" that have afflicted British and American veterans of the conflict.

Detention for stowaways

Nelson, New Zealand: The teenage stowaway twins were spared jail terms when sentenced on a range of charges by a New Zealand court. Joanne and Sarah Ingham, 18, and Jaafar bin Mohamed Zan, a Malaysian crewman, lived in the Australian bush after jumping off a container ship. They were given up for dead until found last week in a Queensland town. A New Zealand judge said that alcohol had played a large part in the twins' lives. Sarah was sentenced to eight months' periodic detention for theft, assault and driving with excess alcohol, and was disqualified from driving for two years. Joanne, whose offending was described as less serious, was given six months' detention. The judge said probation reports showed they had led a transient lifestyle without direction or control. (AFP)

Luther King gun test today

New York: Weapons experts will fire up to 18 rounds today from the rifle said to have been used to kill Martin Luther King (Tunku Varadarajan writes). The tests are the latest step in the marathon attempt by James Earl Ray, the man convicted of killing the civil rights leader in Memphis in 1968, to prove his innocence. Yesterday the gun was brought out of its police safe for use for the first time since the shooting. Ray has won the King family's support for his attempt to gain a retrial. An electron microscope will be used to compare markings on the bullet found in King's body with those on the test bullets. Matching markings would mean the bullet came from Ray's gun.

Aftershock hits Iran villages

Tehran: A strong aftershock hit villages devastated by an earthquake in eastern Iran, flattening more houses and killing one person, the Iran national news agency said. The aftershock, measuring 5.6 on the Richter scale, was the strongest of 250 recorded since Saturday's 7.3 quake, which killed 1,560 people and made 50,000 homeless. International aid was continuing to arrive in Iran, where emergency food stocks have been depleted after three major earthquakes this year, including tents, blankets, rice, canned food and medicines. (Reuters)

Actor harassed son's mother

Baltimore: John Heard, right, the actor, was sentenced to 18 months' probation and ordered to seek psychological treatment for harassing Melissa Leo, the actress mother of his nine-year-old son. Heard, best known as the father in the *Home Alone* films, was convicted in March of telephone misuse and trespassing for making more than 100 telephone calls to Ms Leo, who appears in the TV police series *Homicide*. If he violates his probation, he could face six years in jail. (AP)

Laser 'attack' on helicopter

Washington: The Pentagon said a Russian merchant ship in American waters may have shone a laser on a Canadian military helicopter last month, causing painful burns to two people on board. However, a spokesman said the *Kapitan Man* was searched by the US Coast Guard three days later and no device was found. The pilot and a US Navy lieutenant reported burns to their eyes the day after the incident. (Reuters)

'Dracula' descendant dies

Paris: Alexandra Caradjia-Kretulesco, a Romanian princess who claimed direct descent from the 15th-century Prince Vlad of Transylvania — also known as Vlad the Impaler, whose exploits inspired Bram Stoker's fictional vampire, Count Dracula — has died in Paris, aged 77. (Reuters)

Oil deal may spark trade row with US

By BRONWEN MADDOX
IN WASHINGTON
AND MICHAEL BINYON

IN WHAT could prove to be the first diplomatic test for the new Government, the United States is threatening to impose sanctions on a British-Canadian consortium if it drills for oil in Iran.

Britain's PFI Frischmann and Canada's Bow Valley are understood to have been awarded a contract worth up to \$140 million (£87.5 million) by Iran to develop the offshore Bakhti oilfield.

The US State Department was consid-

ering yesterday whether the two firms should become the first to be penalised under the 1996 Iran-Libya Sanctions Act, passed in the wake of US charges that the two states sponsor terrorism. Under the law, companies investing more than \$40 million in any one year in Iranian or Libyan oil or gas projects could face financial penalties or trade sanctions.

There has been speculation that the State Department is loathe to apply sanctions because a row with important trading partners could ensue. But it claims the Act has been successful because it has deterred investment. If

sanctions are imposed on the British firm, the Government must decide if it should confront Washington on the matter. Britain has been one of the most vociferous opponents of the law. But Labour has promised to toughen Britain's stance towards countries accused of human rights violations, so the Government may decide to support the US decision.

The Iranian contract comes a month after a verdict by a German court that Iran was responsible for the murder of Kurdish exiles. That decision led to new sanctions by the European Union.

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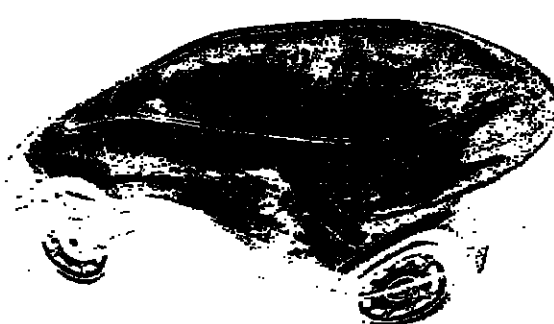
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Proposed Israeli Act 'will outlaw New Testament'

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

CHRISTIANS are up in arms about a proposed Israeli law that they fear could be interpreted as making possession of the New Testament a criminal offence punishable by a year in jail.

The proposed legislation takes the form of a far-reaching extension of statutes against missionary activity. The proposal has recently passed its first Knesset reading and is now before the Law Committee of the 120-seat parliament.

Clarence Wagner, a prominent Jerusalem-based Christian and member of the religious group Bridges for Peace, said: "There has been a preliminary reading on a law which makes it illegal to have literature which can be considered missionary. Just having a

New Testament in my home can be construed in certain quarters as being missionary. I see these kind of laws as a great threat to the Jewish State and to democracy."

An English translation of the draconian proposed law states: "Whoever possesses, contrary to the law, or prints or copies or distributes or shares or imports tracts, or advertises things in which there is an inducement for religious conversion is liable for one-year imprisonment." The amendment adds: "Any tract or advertisement in which there is inducement to religious conversion will be confiscated."

The new law is much tougher than the existing anti-missionary legislation which is opposed to "any missionary

seduction to convert religion", especially that involving minors and offering financial inducements to Jewish adults to convert.

Jan Willem Van der Hoeven, the spokesman for the pro-Israel International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem, told *The Jerusalem Report*: "Churches around the world have fasted and prayed against this law." He expressed concern that it could diminish broad support for Israel among evangelical Christians.

Christians are hoping to whip up parliamentary opposition against the further readings necessary to transform the Bill into law. Christian leaders are well aware, however, that religious Jews won large numbers of votes in last year's election and, with 23 seats in the Knesset, could make or break any feasible coalition led by a secular party.

The Bill's sponsors, Moshe Gafni, of the ultra-Orthodox United Torah Judaism Party, and Nissim Zivli, of the main opposition Labour Party, claim that they are responding to a Christian missionary campaign last year, when hundreds of thousands of Jews received proselytising material in the post.

Mr Zivli, a close ally of Shimon Peres, the defeated Labour leader, denied that his sponsorship of the Bill had anything to do with Labour attempts to woo religious parties away from the ruling right-wing coalition. He



Dennis Ross, the US envoy trying to break the deadlock in peace talks between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation, tours the Hisham's Palace archaeological site in Jericho with the chief PLO negotiator, Saeb Erakat. Talks broke down over Israeli settlements in Arab east Jerusalem. Mr Ross was due to host more talks last night

Supreme Court turns down inquiry plea

Jerusalem: Israel's Supreme Court yesterday rejected a request to set up a commission of inquiry into the alleged corruption surrounding the appointment of a new Attorney-General earlier this year.

The five judges turned down most of the nine petitions filed by various plaintiffs about the matter, which involved the short-lived appointment to the post in January of Roni Bar-On, a friend of Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister.

He said: "No one will be barred from possessing the New Testament. If the law violates the Basic Law: Human Dignity and Freedom, I will not support it."

Mr Gafni sounded a different note: "The Jewish nation suffered enough through its history as a result of attempts to convert it," he said. "What is freedom of speech compared with this?"

The judges rejected a demand that a state commission should be set up to look into the entire affair and that the Government should publish the full findings of an investigation that led the police to recommend that Mr Netanyahu should face charges.

Several of the remaining petitions still being considered by the Supreme Court demand that it should overturn the decision not to charge Mr Netanyahu over the affair. (AFP)

McVeigh defence strategy backfires

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

THE small-town lawyer who portrayed Timothy McVeigh as a friendly young man wrongly accused of the Oklahoma City bombing has seen the prosecution pile up a devastating case that has the defence reeling.

For two years, Stephen Jones courted the American media as a spin-doctor on behalf of his client. He hinted darkly of foreign terrorist involvement in the bombing. He suggested that the real bomber had eluded the FBI's grasp. Reporters who agreed not to discuss the case were allowed to interview Mr McVeigh in custody and found him relaxed and smiling, in studied contrast to his cold-eyed stare after his arrest.

The spinning went out of control, however, when a newspaper alleged that Mr McVeigh had given his defence team a confession for the blast on April 19, 1995. Mr Jones offered three explanations: it was a hoax; it was stolen; and it was intended to mislead another suspect.

Jeffrey Toobin, a lawyer and author who is attending the trial, writes in *The New Yorker* this week that Mr Jones's media strategy has backfired. Further, he says: "As the Government's proof has cascaded down on his client, Jones's options have dwindled. At times, the lawyer seems even to have lost his bearing in the courtroom."

Now, as the prosecution approaches the end of its compelling evidence, observers are wondering if Mr Jones has many shots in his locker for the defence. He is expected to attack mistakes at the FBI crime laboratory, but these are not thought to impinge seriously on the case.

Mr Jones tried hard to discredit Michael Fortier, the prosecution's most damaging witness and a former army friend of Mr McVeigh's.

Mr Fortier stuck to his account of how the pair of them scouted the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building where 168 died and how Mr McVeigh showed him an alley where he would park his getaway car after leaving a bomb-laden rental van outside the building.



A Christian cleric in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Christ's traditional burial place, in Jerusalem

Clinton aims to foil hardliners by backing moderate Bill on abortion

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT CLINTON was on the verge of supporting a ban on late abortions yesterday, a landmark decision that would allow Congress to remove an important slice of abortion rights in force for a quarter of a century.

As the Senate began a two-day debate on abortion rights yesterday, Mr Clinton was considering sup-

porting a moderate curtailment of abortion to avoid another showdown with opponents of abortion in Congress. Anti-abortion sentiment in both Houses has grown since the November elections.

Congress has often sought to chip away at the Supreme Court's 1973 ruling which legalised most types of abortion by trying to restrict the availability of the operation. But proposed legislation, if passed, would mark a much greater en-

croachment in that it would ban an entire category of abortions. Mr Clinton was considering yesterday whether to throw his weight behind a Bill proposed by Tom Daschle, leader of the Senate Democrats, which would ban abortions after the point at which the foetus was deemed viable, or able to survive outside the womb. Mr Daschle estimates that viability comes after 23 to 28 weeks.

The Bill makes an exception for

cases where the mother's health risks "grievous injury", a principle Mr Clinton supports vigorously. He has used his veto against previous Bills that did not make that exception. Although the exception is more narrowly worded than he would like, he may be tempted to support Mr Daschle's Bill so as to scupper a Republican-backed Bill aiming to ban "partial birth" abortions which makes no exceptions for the woman's health.

"Partial birth", referred to by doctors as "dilation and extraction", is an abortion procedure where the skull of the foetus is crushed before the foetus is drawn out. Opponents of abortion rights have focused on it in the past year as a way of drumming up popular support for anti-abortion Bills.

Of the 1.3 million abortions performed each year in the United States, about 1.3 per cent take place after 20 weeks, halfway through a

pregnancy. Doctors put the number of partial birth abortions at about 2,000, most before the foetus could live on its own.

Under the Republican-backed Bill, a doctor performing an illegal abortion would face a \$250,000 (£153,000) fine and two years in prison. Under the Democrat Bill, he or she would face a \$100,000 fine and suspension of licence for a first offence, and a \$250,000 fine and loss of licence for a second offence.

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Rajiv Gandhi 'was key conspirator in weapons scandal'

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN DELHI

RAJIV GANDHI, the former Indian Prime Minister assassinated in 1991, has been named as the main conspirator in a multimillion-pound corruption scandal surrounding the purchase of artillery guns from Bofors.

This adds significance to the decision last week by Sonia Gandhi, his widow, to join the Congress party for the first time. One theory is that this could provide political protection if the Bofors affair becomes an explosive issue. Mrs Gandhi lives a secluded life, never speaking on the record to journalists and mixing almost exclusively with a small circle of trusted friends.

The *Indian Express* quoted anonymous, highly placed sources in the Cabinet secretariat as saying that the Central Bureau of Investigation had sent a "top-secret" Bofors document to the Government for clearance. Inder Kumar Gujral, the new Prime Minister, will decide whether to allow the bureau formally to name the accused and proceed with charges.

The Bofors deal, worth more than 14 billion rupees (£250 million at today's rates), was signed by the Gandhi Government in 1986. Bofors has admitted paying "commissions" and Gandhi's role in the affair has always been

suspected. It will further sully the name of the Gandhi family if he is confirmed as a conspirator. The corruption culture came firmly established in the 1970s, when his mother, Indira Gandhi, was Prime Minister. She mounted the only concerted assault on Indian democracy by imposing a state of emergency and imprisoning political opponents.

The *Express* said the bureau report accuses Gandhi of hatching a conspiracy to cause "wilful loss to the state exchequer" and allowing middlemen to make money, including an Italian friend of the Italian-born Mrs Gandhi, who is a naturalised Indian. The bureau reportedly failed



Gandhi: pushed through arms deal in 48 hours

to establish whether Gandhi personally enriched himself.

General K. Sundarji, the army chief at the time, has reportedly been cleared by the bureau of wrongdoing. He had often declared his preference for the French Sofma gun to Bofors weapons, before changing his mind. Once he stated his preference for Bofors, Gandhi pushed through the deal within 48 hours.

Bank documents released by Swiss authorities reportedly reveal that Mrs Gandhi's Italian friend, Ottavio Quattrocchi, received £1.57 million for acting as a middleman.

The Bofors affair ranks as one of the biggest corrupt deals in independent India. The gun has not been highly regarded by the Indian Army.

Mrs Gandhi's decision to become a party member has several possible explanations. She may be preparing the way for one of her two children, Priyanka and Rahul, to enter politics, or may have been persuaded to become involved to influence the outcome of forthcoming elections for party president. There is no indication that she intends to run for party or political office.

Hotel blaze: A fire damaged a hotel where detectives have set up an office to investigate the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. About 250 guests were evacuated. (AFP)

Baby has unhappy hour in New York

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN IN NEW YORK

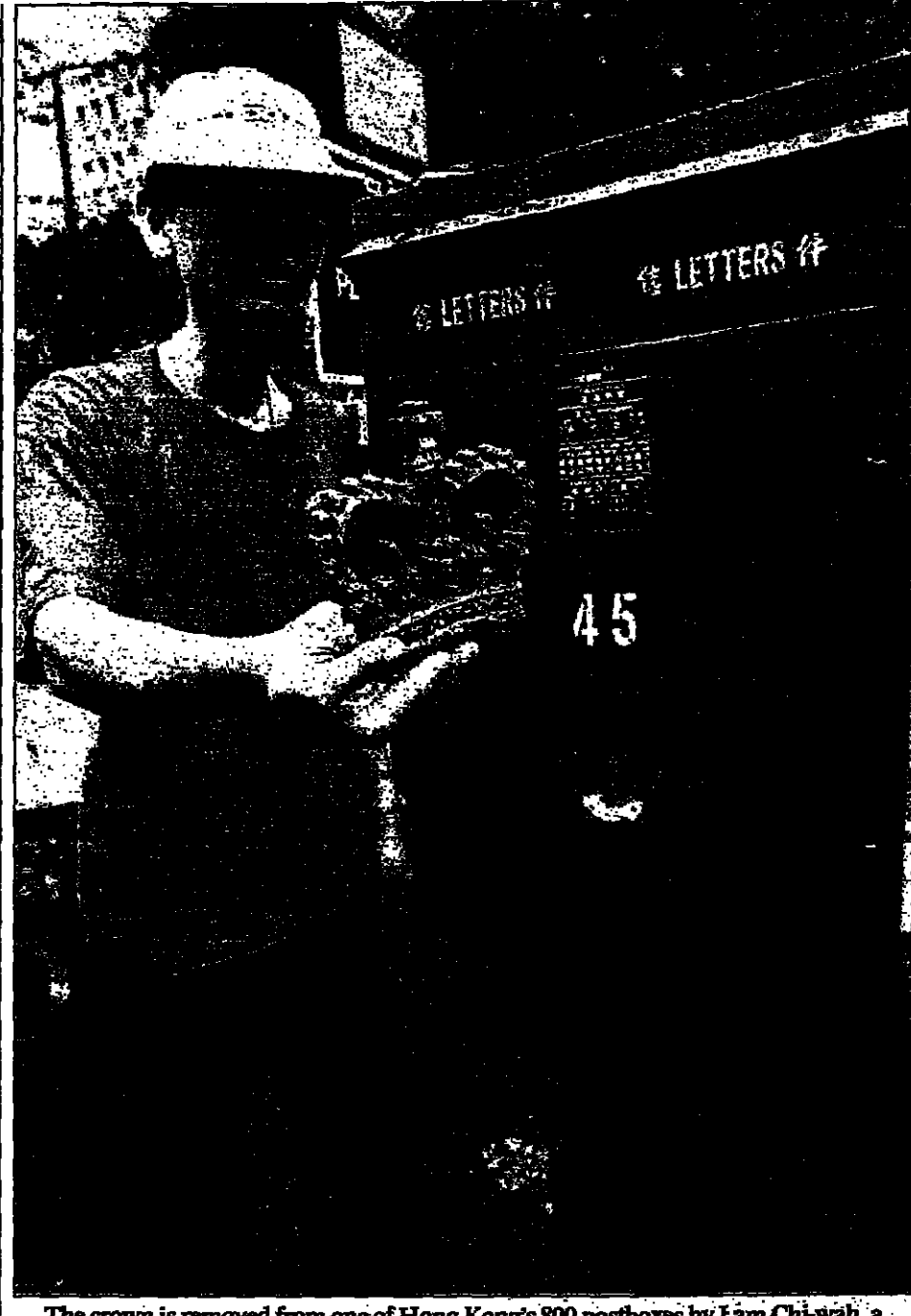
A DANISH actress and her lover from Brooklyn are facing trial for leaving their baby in a pram outside a bistro in downtown New York while they guzzled margaritas.

Police have charged Annette Sorensen, 30, and Xavier Wardlaw, 49, with "endangering the welfare and physical well-being" of 14-month-old Liv Sorensen-Wardlaw last Saturday.

A police car pulled up alongside the baby's pram and discovered her in full view. Two officers went into the restaurant and arrested the parents, ignoring their argument that Liv could be seen clearly from the window. The couple spent two nights in detention.

The case appears to rest on "cultural factors". Ms Sorensen, arguing that she would "leave her baby out on a Danish pavement", has lambasted the police. But local opinion has criticised her for failing to tell the difference between New York and Copenhagen. The *New York Post* said the corner of Second Avenue in question was "about as kid-friendly as a shark tank".

But in Copenhagen, Danish radio broadcast a quote by Hillary Clinton who said during a visit there in 1995: "Oh, if we all could live in cities where we could leave our babies in baby carriages outdoors while we went into shops without any fear."



The crown is removed from one of Hong Kong's 800 postboxes by Lam Chi-wah, a contractor, to be replaced by a humming-bird logo for China's takeover on July 1. Boxes will be repainted green. The Queen's profile was taken off stamps this year

Japanese Emperor plans visit to Britain

FROM ROBERT WEYMANT IN TOKYO

EMPEROR AKIHIRO hopes to visit Britain next year. It is 27 years since the last Japanese state visit, when his father, Hirohito, was given a very hostile reception.

Tokyo palace officials still recall with horror the demonstrations that greeted Hirohito in London and other European capitals. The then Emperor, who helped to plan Japan's strategy in the Second World War, made headlines rise because he had no apparent remorse for his war crimes.

The speeches he delivered were written by the Imperial Household Agency, which still takes the position that Japan fought a righteous war. They contained no apology. Emperor Akihito took the Chrysanthemum Throne in 1989. Japan hopes he will be welcomed in London, but some courtiers are said to be worried.

As the two governments get down to the details of the visit, former prisoners of war and their families will want to know if Akihito will apologise for the atrocities committed by his nation more than 50 years ago. The Emperor was born in 1933, so was too young to don military uniform, but the Imperial Family was directly involved in the war.

He occupies the throne today because the West, for political reasons, acquiesced his father of responsibility for waging aggressive war.

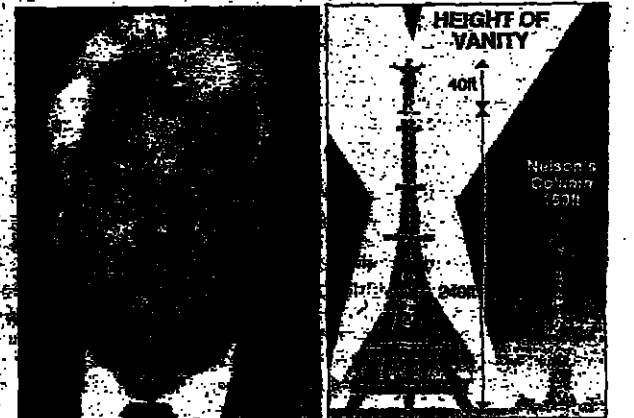
Turkmen ruler's statue to cast giant shadow over capital

FROM ROBIN LODGE IN MOSCOW

REPORTS from Ashkhabad, capital of the former Soviet Central Asian republic of Turkmenistan, say that the city is shortly to be adorned with a huge statue of its supreme ruler, Saparmurat Niyazov, to honour the man who has pledged to turn his country into a second Kuwait.

Reuters quoted local press reports as saying that plans had been announced to build a 240ft tower next to the recently completed presidential palace. The tower would be topped by a 40ft revolving statue of President Niyazov, 57, which, according to some reports, would be floodlit at night to allow the populace a 24-hour view of the man awarded the title Turkmenbashi, or leader of all Turkmen, by his enthusiastic parliament.

Local officials, however, were coy about the project yesterday. A presidential administration official professed to have no information about the plan. A similar response came from the deputy editor of the official news agency, Turk-



President Niyazov and the design for his huge statue

men Press. A statue, towering over the city, with Turkmenistan's flag on its base, and a revolving gallery high over the city, above which the statue would stand.

But the project still requires President Niyazov to give his consent. Mr Kolodintsev, the possibility of Mr Niyazov withholding his consent appears remote. The Turkmenbashi's smiling features adorn hoardings all over Ashkhabad where no office is without his portrait.

Guernica painting kept from Basques

FROM GILES TREMLETT IN MADRID

PICASSO's vast and sombre depiction of the bombardment of Guernica has once more stirred political passions in Spain, as authorities in Madrid refused to lend the painting to the Basque country's new cultural jewel, the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao.

The decision has outraged politicians in the northern Basque country. "There are political reasons behind this decision," the Mayor of Guernica, Eduardo Vallejo, of the moderate Basque Nationalist Party, said. "They have stopped the picture coming to the Basque country because it would be seen as a victory for Basque nationalism."

The transfer request coincides with this year's 60th anniversary of the bombing of Guernica by aircraft from Hitler's Condor Legion, which supported Franco's nationalist forces during the Spanish Civil War.

Curators at Madrid's Reina Sofia Museum said they refused the Guggenheim's request because of the fragile state of the 240-sq-ft canvas. They did not believe the Guggenheim could ensure its safety.

Guernica has been moved 32 times since first being displayed at the Spanish Republic's pavilion in the Paris International Exhibition of 1937.

Turks pour into Iraq to hit Kurdish rebels

FROM ANDREW FINNELL IN ISTANBUL

TURKISH troops entered northern Iraq yesterday to attack Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) guerrillas. The Anatolia news agency said jets bombed at least five mountain bases. However, the Foreign Ministry refused to confirm television reports that more than 50,000 soldiers backed by artillery and 250 tanks were involved, which would make the operation bigger than the longest Iraq invasion two years ago.

Yesterday's attack began at dawn, just hours before re-

sumption of peace talks in Ankara between the two main Kurdish factions, the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Massoud Barzani and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan of Jalal Talabani. According to sources, the KDP representative did not demur from a Foreign Ministry announcement that the operation was at Mr Barzani's request; the KDP shares Ankara's wish to see the PKK ousted from its area. Turkish Kurds in the PKK use border bases for their own separatist campaign.

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British Embassy and US envoy's residence on list of alleged targets for besieged Mobutu troops

Fear for foreigners in Kinshasa countdown

FEARS are growing that Kinshasa, the Zairean capital, could become a killing ground as rebel forces close in. Western intelligence reports say foreigners as well as Zairean politicians could be marked out by the beleaguered Zairean Army.

Documents shown to *The Times* name individuals and installations to be targeted. Among those marked for summary "execution" are members of the Cabinet of Kengo wa Dondo, the recently ousted Prime Minister, who is now in exile in Europe. On the list for destruction are government buildings, power and water installations, the American Ambassador's residence and the British Embassy.

Amid speculation that a rebel attack is about to be launched on the city, the Foreign Office has again advised British citizens to leave Kinshasa. On Tuesday, the US State Department advised American nationals to evacuate the capital without delay.

Western diplomats are taking seriously warnings from the Alliance of Democratic

Reports that Zaire's Army could embark on a killing spree in its final hours before defeat are being taken seriously by the West, David Orr writes from Kinshasa

Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire that foreigners will be in the firing line. The alliance, which is poised to overthrow President Mobutu, controls three quarters of the country.

The rebels have said there could be widespread bloodletting by the Zairean forces that have been driven back towards Kinshasa. While Britain and America insist they have no concrete evidence that foreigners are at risk, they are taking the threat seriously.

"In the light of increasing tension, we're re-emphasising our advice to our citizens," said a British Embassy spokesman yesterday as a "dead city" strike, called by the main opposition party, brought Kinshasa to a standstill. "We're aware of the threats made about the safety

of foreigners and we cannot discount that foreigners could be among those at risk, particularly if rioting and shooting break out."

It is feared that the Zairean military might target foreigners to provoke international intervention. Unless there is a last-minute diplomatic solution to the crisis, nothing short of outside intervention is likely to save the Mobutu regime. The cancer-stricken President has relied on foreign help in the past to stay in power. But now he has few friends, and even France, a traditional ally, has shown no appetite for military involvement.

The Mobutu regime is particularly critical of the United States, which it accuses of having sided with Laurent Kabila, the rebel leader. With

South Africa, the US has been at the forefront of diplomatic efforts to persuade President Mobutu to relinquish his 32-year hold on power.

Also fearful of retribution are former government ministers and opposition politicians. One document, obtained by the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera* and shown to *The Times*, gives the coded names of prominent political figures to be killed before any rebel occupation of the city. Although it cannot be authenticated, the document appears to be signed by a high-ranking military authority and bears the stamp of the army's Special Presidential Division.

The British Embassy is the main assembly point for Britons in the event of an evacuation being ordered. British forces, stationed across the River Congo in the Congolese capital of Brazzaville, are on standby to evacuate some 1,700 British citizens and so-called entitled persons. The embassy compound would be secured by Royal Marines and other soldiers.



President Mobutu, left, is welcomed for peace talks by Congo's President Lissouba at Pointe Noir yesterday

Swiss will consider request to freeze dictator's fortune

FROM SAM KILEY IN JOHANNESBURG

SWISS authorities were yesterday reviewing a request from Zaire's chief prosecutor to freeze billions of dollars allegedly siphoned by the ailing President Mobutu.

The request came as talks, described as the last chance for peace, were put off yesterday between Mr Mobutu and the rebel leader Laurent Kabila. They are now scheduled to take place today.

In Geneva, the federal banking commission said it would widen a search for Mr Mobutu's missing billions after an informal inquiry showed there were no Swiss bank accounts held in the dictator's name.

Members of the Mobutu clan have told *The Times* that the family had been moving assets out of Switzerland. The sources said Mr Mobutu's eldest son by his first marriage, Manda Mobutu, flew to Geneva late last week to draw funds to pay Angolan rebels, mercenary groups and Zaireans to stage a counter-attack against Mr Kabila's forces, said yesterday to be 60 miles from the capital, Kinshasa. Mr Manda, who is the President's senior adviser, has been in charge of his father's fi-

nances for several years. Mr Mobutu's wealth is estimated to be at least \$4 billion (£2.5 billion), and possibly much more if the assets of his family are taken into account. Recent investigations have revealed that much of his wealth is invested in properties in Switzerland and France.

A Swiss Government statement said yesterday that President Koller had informed his Cabinet of the demand from the Zairean prosecutor. But Swiss officials were unclear whether the prosecutor was representing the collapsing Mobutu regime, or Mr Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire, which now controls most of the vast country.

The peace talks are aimed at averting a rebel attack on Kinshasa. But as President Mandela and Mr Mobutu waited ashore in Congo's main port of Pointe Noire, where the South African ice-breaker was docked, Mr Kabila was said to be in the Angolan enclave of Cabinda, south of Pointe Noire. A rebel spokesman said they would only join the vessel after it was in international waters.

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Dr Thomas Stuttford on the importance of taking regular meals; a new method of treatment for cystic fibrosis; the benefits of folic acid during pregnancy; Parkinson's disease and the sense of smell; and electrical pain relief

Don't skip your lunch, minister

It is reported that the Government's new ministers are running so fast now they have hit the ground, they have been told there will be no time for them to enjoy the established custom of a long luncheon. Any protests have been met with the suggestion that sandwiches eaten at their desks should provide quite enough energy to keep ministerial grey cells fuelled.

People, unlike wild dogs and even their domesticated cousins, need more than one meal a day. Any edict which encouraged politicians to emulate City workers, who too often skip breakfast and lunch but eat a heavy evening meal, might do irreparable damage to their health, in particular their cardiovascular systems. No prime minister, however large his party's majority, would welcome a regular review of government popularity through unnecessary by-elections. One of the secrets of avoiding heart disease is to range meals so that blood fat levels are never too high, and are cleared efficiently from the bloodstream.

Dr David Frape, a physiologist working on diet and its relationship to heart disease and diabetes at the pathology department of Papworth Hospital near Cambridge, says: "The British custom of three main meals a day, reasonably high in carbohydrates and with some fat but not too much, together with enough protein to maintain the structure of the muscles and other essential

organs, is ideal. This established pattern of eating is changed at the consumer's peril."

This view reflects the standard medical opinion that although breakfast is an important meal, its constitution needs careful thought. "From a physiological point of view," Dr Frape says, "it is a grave mistake not to have breakfast. Porridge, or cereals such as cornflakes with some milk, and toast with a little margarine or butter is ideal."

'People, unlike dogs, need more than one meal a day'

The rate at which the body produces insulin, and the sensitivity of its tissues to insulin, varies throughout the day, like other physiological functions. The digestive and metabolic systems are controlled by an inbuilt body clock.

In the early morning, insulin efficiency is low and too much carbohydrate, particularly the fructose found in sugar, honey and some fruits, may cause a release of very low-density lipoprotein fat from the liver into the bloodstream. Fructose will stimulate fat synthesis at any time of the day, but the large glass of fruit juice is probably best taken between meals. Insulin is not only needed for the metabolism of carbohydrates, but also has a role in triggering the action of lipoprotein lipase, an enzyme which helps to clear the bloodstream of triglycerides and other very low-density lipoproteins. These are the type of blood fats that are lethal if allowed to reach too high a level, or to flow for too long.

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Balanced eating habits are the secret of efficiency at work. Missing a meal and wolfing too much are equally harmful

in a politician's (or anyone else's) arteries.

Too much fat at breakfast, such as a satisfying fry-up of bacon, sausages and eggs with well-buttered toast, can result in particularly high fat levels in the blood at about lunchtime. Some of this breakfast-time fat would have been stored in the walls of the gut, to be released just before the fat from the lunchtime mixed grill starts hitting the circulation in the early afternoon.

Lunch, like breakfast, should be a reasonable mixture of protein, carbohydrate and fat. Too much carbohydrate, even sandwiches with a rich filling, particularly if taken with a large glass of fruit juice laden with fructose and a cup of sweet coffee, could cause a very marked rise in blood fats derived from the liver, as well as raised blood sugar. A high carbohydrate meal, particularly if breakfast has been missed, will also result in high blood sugar levels,

which predispose people to heart and kidney disease.

The human metabolism deals more efficiently with fats, particularly if breakfast has been eaten, as the day wears on. Dinner, however, should not be too late.

Exercise is important. Violent exercise immediately after eating interferes with the circulation, causing too great a proportion of the blood supply to be directed away from the digestive tract and heart to the muscles of the limbs. The heart may thereby be deprived of oxygen, and any tendency to coronary heart disease and angina will be uncovered. Digestion will also be rendered inefficient.

It has been known for many years that insulin production, and the sensitivity or resistance of tissues to it, are important

factors in the liability to develop heart disease. Genetic inheritance may be of great importance in this respect, but whatever someone's genes, they can do much to overcome their inherited constitution.

Three reasonably sized and spaced meals a day, with no long periods of fasting, is ideal. The regime should include a breakfast with a balanced carbohydrate/fat mixture, a standard school meal-type lunch, and a dinner which is not too heavy. A relatively low-fat cereal breakfast, emphasising cornflakes rather than bacon, reduces the girth of the waist.

After meals, a post-prandial nap is useful, and there should be a sensible intake of alcohol — red wine is the best.

Apart from reducing parliamentary vacancies to a minimum, this style of eating would provide some consolation for everyone, politician or constituent.

Big F label reassures pregnant women

FOODS fortified with folic acid in future will be marketed with a distinctive capital F surrounded by a blue circle. This scheme is being introduced by the Health Education Authority.

A surprisingly large number of women who are intending to become pregnant are still not taking additional folic acid. Taken before conception and in the first three months of pregnancy, it helps to prevent abnormalities such as spina bifida and hydrocephalus as well as lesser defects such as hare lip and cleft palate.

The obvious reason why some women do not take folic acid is that their pregnancy was unplanned. Folic acid should be taken even before it is decided to discontinue with contraception.

Taking folic acid tablets is the only method of guaranteeing some protection, but increasing folic acid in the diet — by taking food, including breakfast cereal and bread, that has been fortified with additional acid — could be a great help.

Women who could become pregnant, even if pregnancy is not specifically planned, should choose foods fortified with folic acid and marked with the capital F, eat plenty of green vegetables, and above all take folic acid tablets.

The advantages of additional folic acid will not be confined to women, as it also helps to protect the arteries against arteriosclerosis and hence heart disease.

Symptom of Parkinson's

A new diagnostic sign of Parkinson's disease has been uncovered. Although the characteristic tremor, the slow shake which is at its most obvious when patients are at rest and not using their limbs, is the sign that is the diagnostic feature, recognised by the general public, not all patients with Parkinson's disease initially suffer from it.

Most people are less aware of the rigidity of the joints, difficulty in starting any movement and the lack of facial expression that are also early indicators of

the condition. Research published in the *Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery and Psychiatry* has shown there is another sign, just as common as the tremor, which is rarely commented on even, in medical text books.

Patients with Parkinson's disease are as likely to have a loss of sense of smell as they are to have a shake. Examination reveals that the olfactory bulbs show typical Parkinson's-type changes.

Loss of sense of smell has a very destructive effect on the palate and would increase the liability of patients with Parkinson's disease to become depressed and lose their appetite.

New hope for cystic fibrosis

Patients with all but the mildest forms of cystic fibrosis — the severity varies considerably — used to die in childhood or adolescence from chronic lung disease. Now the median age of survival is in the late 20s or early 30s and is still rising.

Cystic fibrosis is now becoming an adult as well as a paediatric problem. The improved outlook is the result of early diagnosis and an aggressive, proactive approach to treatment to prevent lung damage, rather than merely hoping to correct it.

Better treatment is only possible because of a wider range of antibiotics, together with better methods of delivering them. The latest advance in treatment is to be presented to a conference of the European working group on cystic fibrosis in Davos, in June. Research workers are to introduce a new product, Tobramycin for inhalation, which it is hoped will be launched in America later this year. If it passes British trials, it should be available here next year.

Tobi should further improve the outlook for patients with cystic fibrosis. Patients now have to make their own mixture of Tobramycin for inhalation by using a preparation of the antibiotic intended for injection. The preservatives, which are incorporated into the mixture in some cases,

induce a wheeze or bronchospasm, resulting in constriction of the bronchial tubes so that the antibiotics are prevented from reaching the infected lung tissue.

Any improvement in the treatment of cystic fibrosis is particularly important in Britain where a third of all sufferers in Europe live. The highest incidence in the world is in Co. Cork, which may account for the unusually high proportion of patients who have the classic Celtic looks. The disease is four times as common in the white races as in black races and is very rare among Orientals. In Britain it affects one person in 2,400.

Cystic fibrosis is the most commonly inherited fatal disease and affects the exocrine glands of the lungs and the digestive tract. It results in the glands secreting into the bronchial tubes, and those within the pancreas, bowel ducts, salivary glands and intestine, producing a very sticky material which clogs up the passages, thereby causing obstruction and later recurrent infection. The secretions also obstruct the vas deferens in 98 per cent of men so that nature produces in these cases the type of infertility akin to that which follows a vasectomy. In women fertility is reduced, but not always lost, by the thickness of the cervical secretions. Obstruction to the

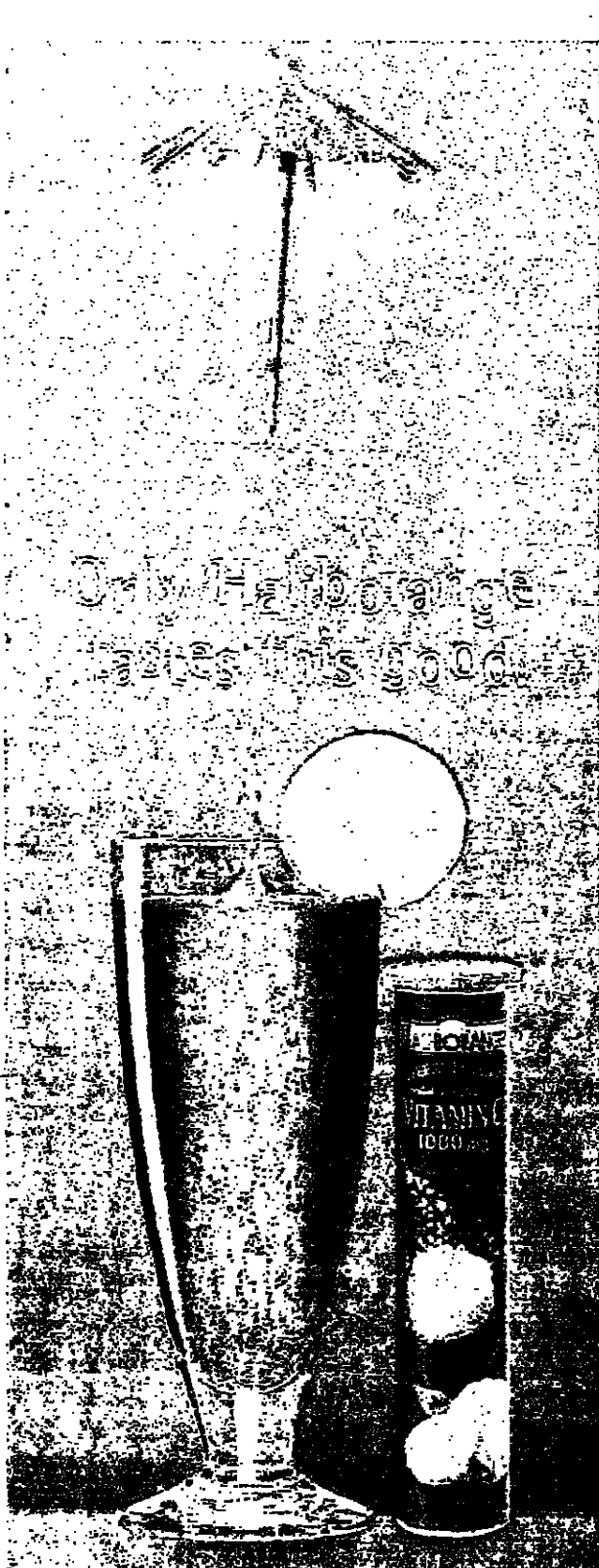
tubes leading to the lungs causes recurrent patches of lung collapse, infection, and breakdown of the lung tissue.

Tobi has been developed by a pharmaceutical company in conjunction with the American cystic fibrosis foundation and the University of Washington. The antibiotic is in a highly concentrated form, which is inhaled deep into the lungs by means of a nebuliser. By applying it directly to the lung tissue a very much heavier dose can be delivered than if it was taken by any other route, as Tobramycin is toxic. Although Tobramycin can

cause deafness and kidney damage, neither complication has been reported with Tobi delivered by nebuliser.

The effect of the treatment will be to prevent colonisation of the lung tissue with lethal organisms, and thereby add years to the life of the patient.

This safe delivery system may also enable Tobramycin to be used in other conditions such as bronchiectasis, in which there are areas of chronically infected lung, and possibly against multiple drug-resistant tuberculosis. © Cystic Fibrosis Trust 0181-664 7211



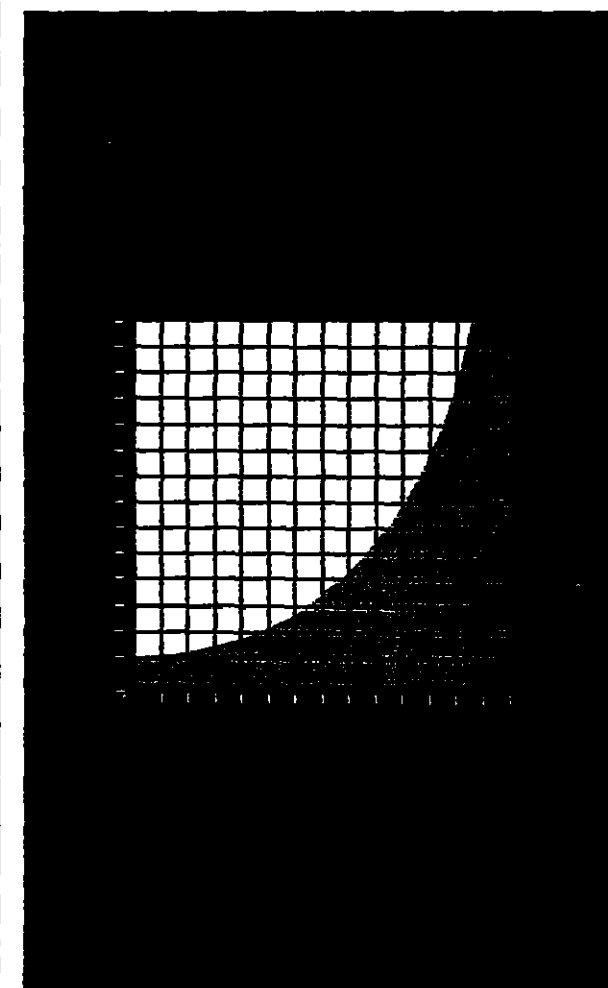
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How electricity can cure pain

THE hushed atmosphere in the marbled splendour of the Royal Society of Medicine was disturbed last week by the presence of a small terrier, known to her family as Melza.

Melza had damaged her spine, possibly by leaping too enthusiastically off the sofa. She growled when patted.

Dogs are not usually admitted to the Royal Society of Medicine but Melza was an exception, for she was the first patient for a demonstration of transcutaneous spinal electroanalgesia (TSE).

In TSE, two surface electrodes are placed over the skin covering different parts of the spine. The electrical pulse delivered through the electrodes is barely felt by the patient — canine or human — and causes no distress or troublesome side effects. TSE does produce, however, marked pain relief in a greater number of patients than could be accounted for by chance or any possible placebo effect.

Within minutes of the electrodes being applied to Melza's neck and back she

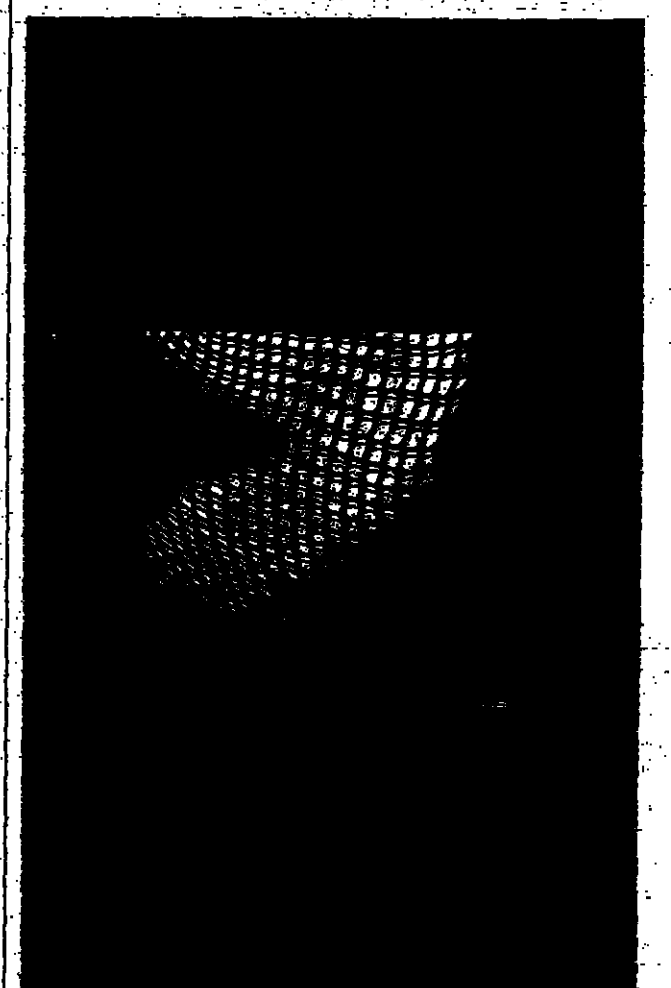


Better: Melza

was yawning, more relaxed and approachable. Later, other patients also had their pain relieved.

Dr Alexander Macdonald, of Bristol, lecturer and inventor of the machine, said the relaxation pain relief didn't occur in all patients, but when it did, its effect was striking.

One baby had destroyed its parents' nights with its inconsolable crying; the TSE machine relaxed it, and it was asleep within minutes.



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'You know how you meet someone and you just click'

He lent Peter Mandelson a car during the election campaign, and will lobby Tony Blair on drugs. Is James Palumbo new Labour's secret weapon? Interview by Mary Riddell

James Palumbo rang, in response to my fax, to say that he didn't do interviews. Well, hardly any. "I always end up sounding like a moron," he explained mournfully. This appeared to be such an overwhelmingly good reason for staying out of print that I was loath to argue.

But then he said very quickly that, actually, he would be terribly thrilled. How soon could we meet, he wondered?

And did I know his new friend, Peter Mandelson? "You do? Oh, can you tell me some gossip about him?" I confessed to being wholly unversed in Mandelson gossip, but the inquisitorial tone of our meeting was already set.

Here we are: several days on, in Palumbo's London club, the Ministry of Sound, where he has prepared a dossier of further queries.

"Am I aggrandising myself by doing this? Am I puffing myself up? Am I really that interesting?" Am I worth interviewing?

Impossible to tell, you feel like saying, unless you calm down and answer some questions. But of course he is intriguing. For a start he has created, from a derelict shoe warehouse behind London's Elephant and Castle, the most durably successful night-club in Britain, drug-free, seemingly impervious to the vagaries of fashion and centre-piece of a leisure business turning over £20 million a year.

Second, and rather more famously, he and his older sister, Annabella, took their father, the former Arts Council chairman, Lord Palumbo, to court, claiming that he was squandering their inheritance on wild extravaganzas. Two years have elapsed since the fund's trustees were changed, but the acrimony of the feud directed at James Palumbo lingers on.

He was, according to the PR campaign of the time, the ingrate son: a man so detested by his mother that she disowned him on her deathbed. Chad Varah, the founder of the Samaritans and the man who baptised Palumbo, reportedly branded him as diabolical and declined to christen his illegitimate child.

Although the demonisation of James Palumbo was ill-founded, the stigma remains. Once the apotheosis of the Eighties slick-merchant banker ("I hated the City; the whole thing was just horrendous"), he now, aged 34, remains consumed by the desire to make money and to succeed.

Less predictably, he produced a string of anti-establishment advertisements as part of a campaign to mobilise Britain's youth vote for the election. An early

survey suggested that 400,000 more young people registered to vote, although he is diffident about his own part in inspiring them.

Besides, he is honest enough to admit that his crusade was a hybrid of ideology and marketing. "Yes, that's totally true. We thought it elevated us as a business. I wondered how you could tell if it had any results, but I'm less cynical now."

Palumbo himself has a snacking appetite for party politics. An admirer of Simon Hughes, the local Liberal Democrat MP, he released a top man from the Ministry of Sound to work at Conservative Central Office during the run-up to the election. His personal joy at Tony Blair's victory was in large part due to the seemingly mesmeric appeal of Peter Mandelson, to whom he loaned a chauffeur-driven silver Rover almost on first acquaintance.

"You know how you meet someone, and you just click. I really like him. I had dinner one night with him, and he had to go back to the Commons. He'd parked his car on the pavement, and I thought it was just absurd that someone like him should have to drive himself. It seemed mad: a bit dangerous, actually."

I walked him back to his car, and I felt concerned for him. I thought it was something we should do to help. And does Mandelson get to keep the car? "I can't remember when the deal with the driver expires. Two months after the election, I think. Remember, this is just a Rover with a nice old guy to drive it. It's cheap."

It would be obvious to assume that Palumbo's new politics are one more kick against a father said to have lavished millions on the Conservatives, but his allegiance is more complex than that. Both the prodigal and the entrepreneur in him resonate with a creed of hard work and a payback for virtue.

His grandfather, Rudolph, was the son of Italian immigrants and the architect — through astute postwar property dealing — of a £150 million fortune he left in trust for his heirs. Wealth notwithstanding, Palumbo's childhood was marred by the quarrelling and eventual divorce of his father and his mother, Denia.

"There was a lot of shouting. That must have made a mark. It's something I've had to work out over the years. I do have a strong business drive and an abhorrent fear of poverty and not doing well."

After Eton, where he was disliked and bullied — he says for ending the "fagging" system — and Oxford, Palumbo broke off all links with his

family to begin his successful City career. He was already established as a ruthless efficient businessman when he chose to tackle his father over the management of the family trust. Lord Palumbo, by then remarried to a Lebanese divorcee and father to three children by his second marriage, was publicly accused of extravagant mismanagement. A list of his spending, produced by James's lawyers, included £13 million on works of art, £2.5 million on vintage wine and £4.5 million on two Corbusier homes in Paris.

New trustees were ultimately appointed, and James Palumbo was forbidden by court order ever to speak of the case. But why, you wonder, had he ever

brought it, given his pride in making his own fortune rather than leeching off family wealth? "I've always liked charging the guns. I felt it was the right thing to do." Not that he ever yearned for a father who would bestow on him either money or privilege. "I'm really pleased that I wasn't disadvantaged by someone who said: 'Well sort out your career for you, look after you, buy you a house in the country.'"

He has not spoken to Lord Palumbo since the case finished, and — although he claims not to hate him — the chilly contempt he retains for him and his forceful stepmother seems almost more damning. By contrast, he adored the

mother who was said, wrongly, to have disowned him in her dying words. "I was with her when she died. I was a difficult child, not compliant, but I was her favourite. We were both Gemini, both very similar." But his real sentiment is reserved for Alessandra, his six-year-old son, who lives with Palumbo's former girlfriend, Atossa Harari, in Dubai.

"Everyone says their children are wonderful, and it sounds nauseating. But he is genuinely brilliant and smart." And a means, no doubt, for exorcising the failure of his relationship with his own father. "Yes, but I'd love him anyway."

Fatherhood apart, Palumbo has proved to be more socially aware than the "flashy rich gits" he so despises. The drugs problem at the Ministry of Sound was, he says now, so intractable that he feared his clean-up campaign might end in his death.

When I came to this business, with my bonuses and my nice City suits, I was completely naive. Just a joke. I found that every Friday and Saturday night, my door take was £30,000 and the security team was making £40,000 on Ecstasy.

"It happens everywhere in the UK leisure business. There are all these fat bastards running chains of discos and bowling alleys, and none of them admits it. It sounds dramatic, but I hired a psychoanalyst to help us to get the dealers out and cope with the threats. If they say: 'We're going to kill you', you know what you're up against. But the threats [from the East End drug gangs] are much more sinister."

The word is cut off, but if the business is cut off, they will follow you home, go for your family, stab you or murder you." However real the threat to Palumbo's life, the London drugs business was so pervasive that he still buses in highly paid professional security teams from the north to stop any recurrence.

In addition, he sees his stance on drugs as a political mission, which he has already begun. "I helped to write the drugs Bill that went through Parliament several weeks ago. That gives the police fairly draconian powers to close down clubs, but we have to go a lot further."

Tony [Blair] is going to be really busy, but I shall argue with him, if I get the chance, that it's all very well for young people to be well educated, but you have also to look properly at the effects of drugs.

"I'm about to start a massive campaign in the industry. We know that door teams are still organising drugs, and I shall have to explain that to Peter or someone." Hence, you suppose, the Mandelson car: offered partly as a kind gesture but also perhaps (although Palumbo does not say so) as a rich man's ploy to put a marker down on his pet crusade. Not that he is at all sure how he will mesh with Labour.

He would, for instance, like to find a girlfriend and have more children but cannot endure the thought of marriage. "Tony is so strict," he says with anxious nuance. "So how will that fit in with new Labour?"

This query reminds him that I have had the lion's share of the questions. "How did I do?" he wonders. "What were my answers like? Too short? Too long?"

He refrains from asking whether he had sounded, as he gloomily feared, like a moron. He had not. Just curiously juvenile, in the way of someone still haunted by a damaged childhood. If money helped to create those problems, then money, he believes, is also the solution.

His above-the-line target is a niche in the international market and a trebled turnover. The real agenda, you feel, is to outshine a grandfather famous for building fortunes and a father allegedly more famous for spending them. Only then will he consider that, as with the Labour victory, diligence and virtue have produced suitable dividends.

● This article is abridged from an interview in the current issue of the New Statesman



James Palumbo: "When I came to this business, with my bonuses and my nice City suits, I was completely naive"

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LIKE Socrates, Copernicus and Galileo before him, Tony Banks has been cruelly misunderstood. Tony Blair's new Minister for Sport wasn't making mock when he crossed his fingers in the Commons this week to swear allegiance to the Crown.

What he was doing — maybe, on reflection, too discreetly — was promoting Tony Blair's long-winded speeches and long-winded speeches and long, while at the same time nudging Britain back into the bosom of the European Union.

It came about like this: Mr Blair has decided that one

A two-fingered gesture of goodwill

way to achieve these goals is to ape Europe's passion for hand gestures. Not only will the shorthand of gestures cut out the waffle in Cabinet meetings, they will also have the effect of making every street corner in Norwich feel as cosmopolitan as Naples.

The reason Blair chose Banks to spearhead this important work was because Banks — being a hot-blooded, straight-to-the-point sort of fellow — is a man who knows that you can say more with

two fingers than with a thousand words. Winston Churchill knew it, too. And that is why Banks was crossing his fingers.

He was doing it in the superstitious hope that it might help him to keep his new job. "It's such a wonderful job that I can't believe my luck. I am a very superstitious person. I'm always crossing my fingers."

The gesture, devised by early Christians, comes from the belief that making the sign

of the cross will avert bad luck. It has long since become a common way of seeking good fortune. Camelot chose it as the symbol of the National Lottery.

SOON we will all be making similar gestures: at home, at the office, in the supermarket. As Banks gets into his stride, every British schoolchild will know that in France, a ring formed by joining the thumb and index finger means "worthless". They will see that

in both France and Italy, flicking an imaginary beard with the backs of one's fingers under the chin signals disbelief. Italy, where it is often too hot to talk, is probably Europe's most eloquent manual communicator: by pressing together his thumb and forefinger and screwing them into the cheek, an Italian expresses praise, especially for food. If a Roman tugs at his right ear, he thinks you're effeminate.

Germans signal good luck by tucking their thumb into

their fist, or by pounding an imaginary table. In Holland, if the person you are talking to starts sucking his thumb, he thinks you are lying. See how speedy and unfussy it is?

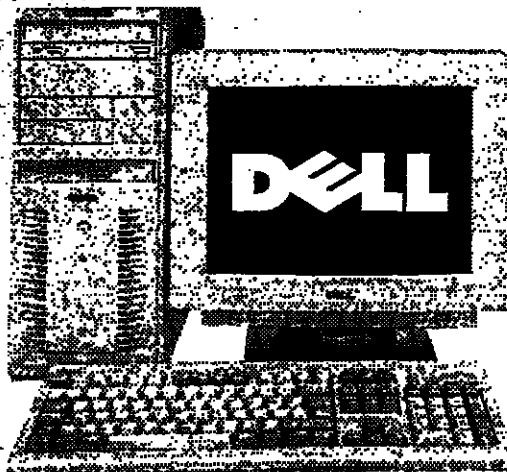
In Spain and Italy, by pulling down the eyelid with a forefinger, you can warn someone to be alert. So if you should spot Ann Widdecombe doing this when the Tory party is debating whether to choose Michael Howard as its next leader, you will know that the Blair and Banks revolution is already making its mark.

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Twilight of our elective dictatorship

Anthony Lester hails a first step towards a British Bill of Rights

The new Government has inherited the most unbridled political system of any modern democracy. With its huge majority, the Cabinet and the governing party can control the elected chamber. We have no written constitution limiting the powers of government and no fundamental law protecting the rights of the individual citizen against the misuse of the powers of the State.

The British system is also the most centralised in Europe — our capital city deprived of an elected authority, Scotland, Wales and the English regions ruled by Whitehall and the new magistracy of unelected quangos. Local government, civic virtue and public service have been undermined by worship at the altar of market forces. This is the system shaped and defended by the Conservatives for 18 years, aptly described by Lord Hailsham as the "elective dictatorship".

I was a member of the Joint Committee that reached an historic agreement between the Labour and Liberal Democrat parties to co-operate in seeking to renew the British political system. We found common ground, published our proposals, and included them in our manifestos. We were given wide-spread popular support across the country in the general election on constitutional issues that were strongly contested by a Tory party of Little Englanders. It is greatly to the credit of Tony Blair and his colleagues that immediately on winning office they seek to limit their inherited powers by securing the European Convention on Human Rights in UK law. They demonstrate a welcome commitment to plural democracy and accountable government, as well as to administrative efficiency. There is glimmering along the corridors of power.

The rights guaranteed by the Convention are part of our birthright and constitutional heritage. The Text of the Convention was drafted by British lawyers. It has been exported by British governments to become part of the written constitutions of many Commonwealth countries.

What is envisaged involves no challenge to the traditional dogma of parliamentary sovereignty. The Government's measure is likely to be similar to my Human Rights Bill, given an unopposed second reading in the Lords in February. Taking a leaf from the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990, it will require our courts to give a meaning to statutes that is consistent with Convention rights. Its enactment will involve the exercise of parliamentary sovereignty, not its diminution. The new Act will not be entrenched against amendment or repeal by a future Parliament, nor will it authorise a government of unelected judges. The courts will treat the Act as a fundamental law having special constitutional status unless and until Parliament rules to the contrary.

Ministers, civil servants and other public authorities will be required by law to discharge the powers delegated by Parliament in a manner that respects human rights — for example, the power to censor broadcasting, or to place a wiretap in our homes, to blight our property, or to invade our personal privacy.

The courts will have a mandate to balance the competing aspects of the public interest where human rights are at stake, and to provide speedy and effective remedies. British case law will enrich the uncertain jurisprudence of the grossly overburdened European Court of Human Rights.

The new law will replace ethical aimlessness with a code guiding the work of all three branches of government, promoting an open society and a modern democracy. When introducing Bills into Parliament, ministers will be required to explain why any provision is, or appears to be, inconsistent with ECHR rights. The role of Parliament will also be enhanced by the creation of a Joint Select Committee to scrutinise pending measures in the light of ECHR rights, and advise Parliament about compliance with the UK's obligations under the international human rights codes.

One key commitment is to establish a Human Rights Commission to provide well-targeted advice and assistance to law centres, Citizens Advice Bureaux, and others in bringing human rights cases. It will improve access to justice at minimal cost. It will also enable the Home Secretary to rationalise the plethora of existing commissions, tackling gender, racial, religious and disability discrimination. The time is overdue to strengthen law enforcement and reduce wasteful duplication, bringing the expertise of these agencies under the umbrella of a Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

Incorporating the Convention is a necessary condition for other constitutional reforms, including the sharing of power with a Scottish parliament, a Welsh assembly, and English regional assemblies. Incorporation is the crucial first step towards a more comprehensive British Bill of Rights.

The new Parliament will have the opportunity to implement an ambitious programme of constitutional reforms, including a Freedom of Information Act, the reform of both Houses, and the introduction of an electoral system that more fairly represents the wishes of the voters in European, national, regional and local elections. If they are to endure, these reforms must be in line with British traditions and based on a wide popular consensus. I hope and believe that Tony Blair's Government will maintain the momentum, and will have the necessary political will and skill, a combination of principle and common sense.

Lord Lester of Herne Hill QC is a constitutional and human rights lawyer. He takes the Liberal Democrat whip in the Lords.



"TONY, I'M WONDERING IF THIS ISN'T SOMETHING OF AN OWN GOAL..."

Exhausted volcanoes

A caretaker would give dejected Tories time to find a leader worthy of Blair

Their first fortnight out of office has been a disaster for the Conservatives. John Major has resigned, but is still technically leader of the party. He probably thought that the surviving Members of Parliament would move rapidly to elect Michael Heseltine as his successor, but Mr Heseltine's illness made him withdraw. The six "not him" candidates were left, and they are getting "notter" by the day.

The surviving Tory MPs, in any case, are an absurdly unrepresentative constituency, do not want Kenneth Clarke because he is in favour of the euro, William Hague because he is too young and too Majorish, Peter Lilley because they think he lacks charisma, Stephen Dorrell because he is not as charismatic as Mr Lilley, Michael Howard because they believe everything that Ann Widdecombe has said even if they do not think she should have said it, or John Redwood, because he was the Cassandra of the party, and correctly warned of the fall of the Tories. There is now every possibility that a rump electorate, in a state of shock, will choose a leader in whom they have no confidence.

Whoever becomes leader, the statistical probability is that Labour will win the next election. In recent British political history, the cycle of disillusionment has normally been a two-term one. Since the Second World War there have been six second-term elections: the incumbent Government has won five of them, four by an increased majority. Ted Heath's defeat in 1974, during the miners' strike, was the only exception. Tony Blair has the largest majority since 1931 and has dropped the unpopularity of socialism and high personal taxation. He is a very good campaigner. Whatever the Conservatives do, he will probably win the next election.

Many Conservative Members of Parliament see this only too clearly. They do not want to commit themselves to a leader who would not be able to challenge Tony Blair, who might be brushed aside. They doubt whether any of the present candidates could unite the party, and they fear that an unsuccessful leader might himself be subject to a mid-term challenge. They do not want to elect the Conservative equivalent of Neil Kinnock. They are also conscious of the inadequacy of their position. No representative of Scotland, no representative of Wales,

none from most of the big cities outside London, none from some of the English regions — it is not an adequate electorate.

They also find it hard to choose a new leader when they do not know what policy the Conservative Party will wish to support. How Eurosceptic is the Tory party? How Eurosceptic are the potential leaders? They all voted for Maastricht and against a Maastricht referendum, even John Redwood. William Hague is against the single currency, but he has the disturbing support of Tristram Carew-Jones. Tristram's support is a gift to William's opponents.

No doubt the MPs do trust John Redwood's Euroscepticism, but few of them think that he has the personal appeal to be electable as Prime Minister. In any case, they wonder whether Europe will be the same issue in five years' time. Even this month's French elections could change the whole future pattern of European events.

Not surprisingly, there is a growing number arguing for delay. Their case is a strong one. They are not satisfied that any of the present candidates will be adequate to fight the next election. They do not think that so small a surviving group of Conservative members is entitled to elect the leader. They want at least some exploration of policy. They would also like to see the leadership candidates performing in opposition.

There is also the question of the missing candidate. On the morning of polling day, Peter Lilley, who seems to be emerging as the strongest candidate of the Right, was not contemplating the idea of standing himself. He was probably expecting to become Michael Portillo's equivalent of Gordon Brown, the Shadow Chancellor, ally and senior policy maker rather than the leader. Even now, I do not suppose that Mr Lilley thinks that he has Mr Portillo's breadth of leadership gifts.

A Portillo-Lilley team might well have won the leadership battle for the Right, but the electors of Enfield have decided otherwise. The other missing

candidate is Chris Patten. Many people regard him as the only Tory leader who could win back the Centre, who has a chance of beating Tony Blair at the next election. He is certainly the only contender with personal experience of the revolution in Asia which has transformed the world economy. He even has a unique credential for dealing with Europe.

In Hong Kong, whether his policy was right or wrong, he has the stature and courage to stand up to China. He is a real Democrat. A man who can stand up to China can also stand up for British interests in Europe.

If Michael Portillo is the big man of the Right, Chris Patten is the big man of the Centre. Neither is in this Parliament. There were originally four potential candidates of prime ministerial stature, Heseltine, Portillo, Clarke and Patten. Mr Heseltine has been eliminated by his illness, Mr Portillo by losing his seat, Mr Clarke by his policy on the euro and Mr Patten because he has to serve another six weeks in Hong Kong. As a result, none of them will become leader if the "sprint" procedure is followed. The "sprint" candidates are able men but they belong to the B team.

There are two questions to be asked. Is it possible to arrange a delay — which some Members believe should last into next year — to give the Conservatives time to get their decisions right? What ought the electorate to be?

The present leader, John Major, and the 1922 Committee, when the executive has been elected, have full constitutional powers to decide the form and timing of the leadership election.

Even in the old days of the magic circle, the leader was normally elected by Conservative Members of Parliament. Conservative candidates and Conservative peers. In 1957, as the candidate for Chester-le-Street, I attended the election of Harold Macmillan in Church House, Westminster, and abstained from voting for him because of his conduct over

Suez. The nominal electorate in the 1950s was wider than it is now.

There might well be a need for an interim leader. John Major could be asked to go on for a fixed time until the election arrangements had been made. He still has great goodwill in the party, but he is unlikely to be willing to do it this last service. It would also be possible to have an acting leader to do what needs to be done in the next six to 12 months.

John MacGregor, who is talked of as the next Chairman of the 1922 Committee, was an excellent and fair-minded Leader of the House. He would do this interim job very well. There are also other experienced former Cabinet Ministers. The first year of a landslide Parliament is not a time of opportunity for aggressive opposition; an impartial senior figure may be what the party needs.

In constitutional terms, the Tory party ought to democratise itself. The leader should be directly elected by the whole membership of the party. "One man, one vote" is a better principle than "one MP, one vote". Orlov is a Democrat; Orlov is an oligarch.

In practical political terms, the Conservative Party should use the next year to revive the membership, to revive public interest, to debate the issues which were difficult to debate in government, and to elect a leader with authority. There is no authority equal to that of a majority in a nationwide contest. In any case, the Conservative Party must represent the whole United Kingdom, but all of its present Members of Parliament are drawn from England.

Such an election would show that the party is capable of reconstructing itself. I find that every Conservative I meet, in the constituencies or in Parliament, is convinced that such a reconstruction is necessary.

If the Tories are to have any chance of holding Labour to a single term, there must be a root and branch modernisation of their organisation, their policies and their leaders. It should be done from the ground upwards, not from the top down.

A general election for the leadership, with all the strongest candidates available, would take time, but would be the best possible way to start the recovery. In defeat, the Conservatives should go back to the root principle of democratic politics: "Trust the People."

William Rees-Mogg

In power, not just in office

Peter Riddell on a Queen's Speech for a second term

The Queen's Speech was unusually long, but one crucial sentence was missing: "All these measures are intended to secure the re-election of my Government at the end of this Parliament." The underlying strategy is to show that Labour can be trusted in office, that it can help improve ordinary people's lives and that it should be re-elected to a second term. That explains both the desire for centralised Downing Street direction of strategy and Tony Blair's constant refrain: "We were elected as new Labour, we intend to govern as new Labour."

In this respect, the Queen's Speech is, in fashionable jargon, the Russian statement of "new Labour." The balance of measures is very different from the opening Queen's Speeches of the three previous Labour governments since 1945. There are no proposals for big extensions to the public sector or in trade union rights. Apart from the national minimum wage, there is no mention of union legislation. There are more measures to help business.

A striking feature is how much the Blair Government has accepted the economic and industrial framework created by the Tories since 1979. Few Bills are aimed at reversing recent policies, notably those on ending the internal market in the NHS and the assisted-places scheme. Many other Bills — on education, crime, the private finance initiative in the NHS, data protection and competition — could have come from Tory ministers. In many ways, David Blunkett on schools and Jack Straw on young offenders have outflanked the Tories on their own ground.

The most radical proposals are the half-dozen constitutional Bills, on devolution in Scotland and Wales, incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights into British law and a referendum on a directly elected strategic authority and mayor for London. Labour's record: Commons majority has removed the obstacles that might have existed to the passage of these Bills. The feeble response by Tory backbenchers to Blair's speech in the Commons showed how demoralised and disoriented they still are.

The absence in this Queen's Speech of the promised Bill to remove the voting rights of hereditary peers is being used by ministers as a warning to the Lords to observe the so-called Salisbury convention and not to obstruct the principle of proposals included in the Labour manifesto. In the short term, the biggest changes could be in the working of the House of Commons itself through the wide-ranging review of procedure and the handling of Bills promised yesterday by Ann Taylor, the Leader of the Commons.

Otherwise, the Queen's Speech is longer on long-term promises than specific proposals. The most interesting feature of Mr Blair's campaigning speech yesterday was his comment that "we have reached the limit of the public's willingness simply to fund an unreformed welfare system through ever-higher taxes and spending". Frank Field has become the pivotal minister in the Government in its search for welfare reforms for the long term, including pensions.

The first real sign of the Government's ability to make a difference will come in the Budget in a few weeks with the promised windfall levy on the oil and the youth unemployment package. Gordon Brown has shown his leadership in his decision on transferring responsibility for interest rates to the Bank of England and there are already hints of more radical proposals.

The Government's fate will be determined less by yesterday's array of new Bills than by its ability to face three dilemmas. First, ministers will have to find more money for health and education without departmental spending ceilings for the next two years inherited from the Tories. This will involve both a reordering of spending within departments "to meet the priorities of investment, employment and opportunity", and an immediate examination of the allocation of spending between departments. That could turn into the key battle of the administration. Secondly, the Government will have to show that its job-creation measures are not offset by job-destroying proposals such as the minimum wage or new regulations associated with the social chapter. Mr Blair is on the side of promoting competitiveness — as signalled by his appointment of Sir David Simon of BP as adviser for the single market — but there will be strong pressures in the other direction. Thirdly, the Government has to show how it can reconcile, and overcome, a sceptical public mood over Europe and take a leading role in the EU. The key here will be its attitude to monetary union.

Tony Blair clearly relishes power. He talked yesterday about the sense of release after all the years in opposition, of being able to "take decisions at last". He sees the Queen's Speech as a "first instalment of showing that Labour can be both trusted and radical. The Government has made a strong start. But the politics of celebration and gesture is coming to an end. Awkward and painful decisions will soon have to be taken."

P.H.S

Grand gesture

STRANGE calls have been going out from Downing Street for a piano. At Chappell, the music shop in Bond Street, they were telephoned earlier this week by one of Tony Blair's men asking for one to be delivered to the Prime Minister's residence. Not since Sir Edward Heath's tenancy has there been a piano permanently based at No 10.

There was something peculiar about the request, however. When



Heath's piano leaves No 10

Chappell asked whether they were being asked to loan the piano free of charge, or whether they would be paid, there was some hesitation at the other end. That was up to Chappell, said the caller, but they might care to bear in mind the free publicity they would receive from one of their trucks arriving in Downing Street. One problem, replied Chappell, their trucks did not bear their name, for obvious security reasons. They declined the offer to supply the instrument.

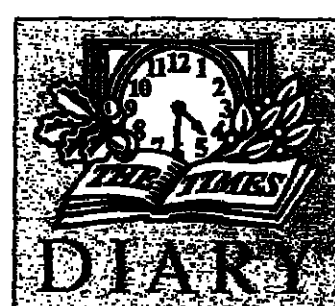
In the years since Heath, Steinway has provided pianos when required for one-off musical evenings. That company has not yet been approached. Images of the Blairs and their friends standing round the piano to sing *The Red Flag*, or Peter Mandelson's favourites from *Cabaret*, must, sadly, be put aside. According to Downing Street, the pianist in residence is Ewan Blair, the PM's 13-year-old son.

Lobbyists looking for an entrée into Blair's Forbidden City might be interested in a property just put up for sale in Trindon, Co Durham. The small terraced house costs a mere £8,750, less

than most corporate parties, and has the advantage of being one door down from the Prime Minister's constituency home, Myrobbella.

Peter's friends

LADY Thatcher's intervention in the Tory leadership campaign cannot be far away now. Among her inner circle, the choice seems to be Peter Lilley. The PR merchant Sir Tim Bell has already come out for him, now her press secretary, the toweringly coiffed Elizabeth Buchanan, has signed up, too. Last, Angle Bray, who left her



post as a press officer at Conservative Central Office in horror when Lady Thatcher was toppled, and stood for East Ham at the general election, has also started working two days a week for the Lilley-putions.

Rubber bullet

INSECURITY is plaguing Roger Law, co-creator of *Spitting Image*. He has accused the Queen of acting out of pique at her *Spitting Image* puppet. Earlier this year, the Royal Mail asked Law to submit stamp designs to commemorate the centenary of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. The images, which must be approved by the Queen, were rejected without explanation. Another set of designs featuring the comedian Tommy Cooper which he was asked to submit were

also thrown out. The Royal Mail dismisses talk of a conspiracy. Law, however, is insistent: "The Queen made it clear to a friend of mine from the Royal Academy who had dinner with her recently that she did not like her puppet at all. You think maybe it's just bad luck, but when the Tommy Cooper ones were knocked back as well, I began to think there was a link."

Harold Pinter's moment of European glory has been sullied by the French press. At the *Théâtre des Champs-Élysées* on Monday evening, Pinter was presented with the highly prized Molière statuette in recognition of his work as a playwright. But the French newspaper *Le Figaro* said yesterday that Pinter lacked eloquence when he acknowledged the award, under a headline which read "Nobody is perfect".

Ice mess

THERE is concern for the health of the orchestra playing in the Disney musical *Beauty and the Beast* which opened in London on Tuesday. On several occasions during the premiere, the players in the pit disappeared under the dry ice billowing from the stage. "It can be a real problem," said a crotchety Joe Alexander, the conductor. "I stand



Unstuck: Roger Law

with my head level with the stage and when the dry ice flows off the edge I can't see a thing. Sometimes it's difficult to breathe."

The problem is one of temperature, my physicist friends tell me. The more people in the theatre, the warmer it gets and the more the dry ice expands. Not that this is of any consolation to the woodwind.



THE QUEEN'S BUSINESS

Labour proposes and the Tories wonder how to oppose

Even a fortnight on, it takes time for a parliamentary observer to become accustomed to the new dispensation. There was John Major, asking questions instead of answering them. There was a leader of the Tory Party complaining that, under the new regime, monetary policy would be too rigorous. The sense of novelty was compounded by the mass of measures coming from the benches to the Speaker's right that would have been unthinkable under the previous administration.

Some of these, such as incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights or devolution of power, are not inconsistent with Conservative policy; indeed Tories have argued for them in the past. But they were policies vigorously opposed by two successive Prime Ministers and had no chance until now of becoming law. Others, such as the phasing out assisted places or the banning of tobacco advertisements, are wholly un-Conservative. In both cases, there is a sense that the direction of the country has changed, confounding those who argued during the election campaign that the result would make no difference.

The constitutional reforms proposed will bring sweeping changes to the governance of Britain — its nations, regions and capital — as well as giving more power to the citizen against the State. A Freedom of Information Act, which we hope will follow this session's White Paper, should add to the protection of the individual against government excess.

It is not just the content of the legislation that makes this Government quite different from the last. Mr Blair's massive majority means that the new laws are certain to pass, without his having constantly to trim or back down at the whim of recalcitrant backbenchers. After 18 years of office, Labour ministers are fresher than their predecessors. Already Whitehall has been jolted by the speed and authority with which decisions

have been taken. If anything, Mr Blair now needs to slow down and consult more, particularly on reforms to the Commons itself.

The new Government's proposals to improve the scrutiny of Bills will be a useful bulwark against the temptations of an elective dictatorship. Some Bills will be published in draft form, allowing for amendments after consultation. The roll-over of unfinished Bills into the succeeding session will save Parliament's time and energy. We have yet to see the proposals to "strengthen the ability of MPs to make the Government answerable for their actions": if these are more than cosmetic, they will be welcome.

So will Mr Major's suggestion that his opposition will, where possible, be constructive. He cannot, of course, bind his successor, but the parliamentary arithmetic is such that the Conservatives can hope only to improve, not block, legislation. Mr Major's undertaking to "welcome adventurous welfare reform", matching Mr Blair's evident intention to undertake such reform, may pave the way for some of the most significant government actions of this Parliament.

At the dispatch box, the new Prime Minister was as confident as his opponent was dignified and effective. But the Conservatives are still not sure whether to criticise Labour for stealing their policies or for proposing laws that are dangerous.

To the former, Mr Blair can argue that the Tories failed to enact those policies despite 18 years in government. To the latter, the Prime Minister will soon have the chance to offer concrete evidence. His programme addresses the main areas of public concern — education, health, law and order, the underclass and devolution. Some of the solutions, however, may well prove to be flawed. By the end of this Parliament, Tories and Labour will no longer be arguing about conjecture. There will be facts to support or undermine their cases.

THE END OF ONE ALLIANCE

And the beginning of a difficult new era in European security.

The deal setting out a special relationship between Nato and Russia reached yesterday has the potential to lessen the strategic risk accompanying Nato enlargement to Central Europe. This, however, is at some cost to Nato's cohesiveness as a military alliance.

This cost must be born as the price of an ill-judged decision. The alternative, a fearful Russia determined to reverse what it perceives as humiliation by the West, could inflict still graver damage to the Continent's security. Against a background of deep domestic hostility to a development that Russia is powerless to prevent, Yevgeny Primakov, the Russian Foreign Minister, has made the best of a bad job. Were it not that Javier Solana, the Nato Secretary-General, persists in believing that enlargement will lead the West into sunny upland pastures, he would deserve similar credit for a tough negotiation.

The detail matters less than Nato's formal acknowledgement that Russia must be engaged in the management of European security. This is an important shift in the direction of making Nato not just a military alliance but a system of collective security. Whether it can be both and keep its military teeth sharp remains to be seen; but as we have argued, enlargement was in any case bound not only to lessen Nato's military readiness in the short term, but to dilute Nato's credibility as a deterrent force. Enlargement is a political leap of faith, not the product of hardheaded military calculus.

The Nato Russia Act, scheduled for signature in Paris on May 27, will give Russia full consultation rights with Nato through a Nato Russia Council which will hold regular meetings and be backed by its own organisation. Washington calls this "a voice not a veto", allowing for the maximum possible consultation and joint decision-taking. President Yeltsin can and will present this as a deal establishing consensus between Nato and Russia on all important security issues.

one that admits, in Mr Primakov's words, that "there should be one security for all".

That is not strictly true. The defence of Alliance territory will continue to be a matter for the Nato Council. But the Nato machine will be more open than it is now. In discussing policy and doctrine, some of the candour that comes from confidence in tight security may be lost. But the deal also imposes obligations on Russia. Just as Nato will tell Russia of any major redeployments, so Russia is required to do the same.

The deal is not, as Russia wanted, in treaty form; as the Russians well understand, the Russian Russia Act is not even legally binding. In substance as well as form, Moscow obtained far less than it wanted with regard to Nato enlargement. On the positioning of nuclear weapons and the deployment of substantial Nato forces in the new member states, Nato has refused the guarantees Russia sought, offering only its "no intention, no plan, no reason" formula. The text will, however, contain a Nato undertaking that the infrastructure in these countries will reflect this formula; airfields will be adapted for rapid deployment, military equipment standardised and forces integrated into the Nato command structure, but there will be no construction of large military bases.

The hardest job yet to come, Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary, the countries most likely to join Nato in 1999, must be told at the Madrid summit in July that so far from membership freeing them from thinking about Russia, they must be especially active in building bridges to Moscow. Mr Yeltsin needs more than a piece of paper to convince Russians that Nato has not stabbed them in the back. Confidence-building will be the work of a generation. It must now be made to succeed; for at the end of that period, historians may cite yesterday as the date when the West unintentionally began to dismantle the North Atlantic Alliance.

DUCA E DONNA

Covent Garden stages its own plot of rivalry and revenge

Scene: a building site in Bow Street. Giant cranes labelled "Royal Opera House" fly overhead. Enter stage right a chorus of sycophantic courtiers in evening dress and opera cloaks, singing softly *Zitti, zitti, moviamo a privilegio!* "Cover up, cover up, that's the refrain." While our cosy cultural perks we seek to maintain! Enter stage left a chorus of militant stagehands in overalls. They sing the union chorus, *Che del lavatore i giorni abbella?* "What makes the worker's life with pleasure abounding? Over time and touring allowances astounding."

Il Duca di Chaulingford (tenor) sings his "fickle" aria *Quella o quella per me pari sono* "This one or that one, Geny or Mary Allen: I find one woman as charmingly executive as the next, and hate the thought of constancy." He is accompanied by his court assassin, Sparafucile Cooper (bass), with his leitmotiv *Lei e l'Inferno* "You're fired. Due to ill health. You'd better believe it. And if you want your severance payment, don't talk to the press." Isaccetto, his court jester, sings: *Dek non parlare al misero*. "Speak not of one for whose loss to us, All ENO as substitute never suffices." For Genista wanted to take opera to the populace! And at the same time cut ticket prices. *Corrigiani, vil razza dannata!* "Vile courtiers and opera toffs, having been awarded all those millions of

National Lottery money for your redevelopment, surely you can no longer run Britain's most highly subsidised culture-palace as a posh private club for corporate hospitality."

Sparafucile stabs Genista McIntosh in the back and puts her in a sack, *Per malattia*. "Due to ill-health." She sings, "Covent Garden shall remain a national flagship of excellence. But it must discover some sort of social relevance in this day and age." Mary Allen (mezzo-soprano), Genista's rival and replacement, sings the beautiful aria *Caro nome che il mio cor*, "How dear the name of ROH, how entrancing its operas, how delightful its ballets, even Freudian Anastasia (and historical characters rarely work in ballet), but how awful its administration, how snobbish its public relations, how old Labour the management of its human resources." The Duke sings *La donna e mobile*, "How fickle women are, fleeing as falling star." Changing for ever. Constant, ah! never! But may Lady Vivien never abandon us, to take her millions elsewhere." There will now be a short interval of two-and-a-half, or it may be five years. After that there might be a surprise finale if the present cast showed any sign of being able to run a professional opera house as easily as they can arrange a royal gala performance or a fracas in a crush bar.

Slow to deal with legal complaints

From Mr Arnold Rosen

Sir, Mr H. P. K. Bradley (letter, May 9) is only the latest in a long line of critics of the Law Society and the way its council supervises the conduct of solicitors.

Over the last decade the profession has poured well over £60 million into policing the profession, yet the council has the same number of members now as it had in 1939. My experience (representing both members of the public as well as solicitors in disciplinary cases) convinces me that it has failed the profession and the public, and that Parliament should take the regulation of solicitors away from the Law Society.

Mr Bradley's suspicion that "Joe Public" will become so disenchanted (by delays) that they drop charges is more widespread than your readers may realise. A client of my firm was the recipient earlier this year of compensation imposed against the Law Society by the legal services ombudsman as a fine for its misconduct of a complaint.

The current director of the Office for the Supervision of Solicitors (formerly the Solicitors Complaints Bureau) — its third in seven years — is approaching the end of his first year: the only apparent change is a strike by his staff. I also have direct evidence of the disclosure of the content of an OSS file to "outsiders" in a public house in late 1996.

Of one thing Mr Bradley may be certain: his complaint will rapidly come to the "top of the pile" as a result of the publication of his letter by *The Times*.

Yours etc,
ARNOLD ROSEN,
Arnold Rosen & Co (solicitors),
199 Piccadilly, W1.
May 12.

From the Director of the Office for the Supervision of Solicitors

Sir, I am the first to acknowledge that city staff are battling with a heavy workload and that there is a real problem with delay in the complaints handling system.

Delay was a problem for the Solicitors Complaints Bureau and a major factor which led to its disestablishment. With the launch of the OSS on September 1, 1996, we committed ourselves to combating delay and to dealing swiftly and effectively with the complaints we received.

Our success, in the short term, has been limited; but we are determined that as we review our working practices, set performance targets and develop our business plan our customers will begin to see marked improvements in our service.

Contrary to the suspicion expressed by Mr Bradley in his letter, delay is not a tool we use to make people drop their complaints: it is often the result of a necessarily lengthy and thorough investigation. In those cases where it is unnecessary we shall be doing our best to ensure that it becomes a thing of the past.

Meanwhile, I have reviewed Mr Bradley's case and am satisfied that my staff kept him informed of the developments in our investigation and acted in his best interest throughout.

Yours faithfully,
PETER ROSS,
Director,
Office for the Supervision of Solicitors,
Victoria Court, 8 Dornier Place,
Leamington Spa, Warwickshire.
May 12.

When to prosecute

From the Chief Crown Prosecutor, CPS Humber

Sir, Mr Michael Gould (letter, May 12), referring to alleged fraud at Sheffield City Council, asks whether the Crown Prosecution Service in Sheffield does not regard it as in the public interest to prosecute in such cases.

The CPS regards fraud by public employees as a serious crime. If there is sufficient evidence the public interest will almost inevitably require a prosecution.

However, in this case the police have not sought advice from CPS. They are not obliged to do so. If they had, they would have been told that the CPS prosecutes in the public interest and the attitude of an employer would not be a decisive factor in the decision to prosecute.

Yours faithfully,
DONALD ADAMS,
Chief Crown Prosecutor,
CPS Humber,
Greenfield House,
39 Scotland Street,
Sheffield, South Yorkshire.
May 12.

Conflict in Zaire

From Mr Anil Savjani

Sir, I am waiting with eyes peeled to spot the precise moment when Laurent Kabila and his men will stop being referred to as "rebels" (report, May 14).

Yours etc,
A. SAVJANI,
38 Morley Crescent West,
Stammore, Middlesex.
May 14.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Election 97: where did the Tories go?

From Dr Charles Pattie and Professor Ron Johnson

Sir, Garrett Fitzgerald's analysis of Labour's recent general election victory ("The Tories who stayed at home", May 12) uses the net data on votes won to suggest that relatively few 1992 Conservative voters switched their allegiance to Labour in 1997, whereas many more abstained.

Our early research on all 1992-97 voting movements sustains his case. Using Gallup data on voting intentions in 1997 and reported vote in 1992, we have estimated that fully 25 per cent of the 14 million people who voted Conservative in 1992 did not do so again in 1997: they had either left the electorate or abstained. About 9 per cent (1.25 million voters) probably switched their support to Labour (less than 2,000 voters per constituency, on average).

In addition to these gains, Labour retained the support of at least 80 per cent of those who voted for the party in 1992 (the Conservative figure was 57 per cent, and that for the Liberal Democrats 59 per cent). It won over just under 900,000 who voted Liberal Democrat in 1992 and 1.8 million from those who did not vote then, the first-time voters in 1997, plus those who abstained in 1992.

Further work may refine these figures somewhat, but the overall pattern is clear: Labour's landslide victory was won with no more than 3 per cent of the electorate transferring their vote from the incumbent party to its main challenger.

It has always been thus: British elections are won and lost because of changes in the voting decisions of relatively few people in a few places.

Yours etc,
C. J. PATTIE,
University of Sheffield,
Department of Geography,
R. J. JOHNSTON,
University of Bristol,
Department of Geography,
University Road, Bristol,
May 12.

From the Chairman of MORI

Sir, Garrett Fitzgerald's otherwise most interesting analysis includes one assumption that cannot go unchallenged, that most Referendum Party voters came from former Conservative voters.

In fact, as measured throughout the campaign and confirmed in aggregate analysis of voting behaviour (based on more than 13,000 interviews), barely

Where credit's due

From Mr Carlos Larrea

Sir, The Labour Party had little choice in the Thatcher era but to modify itself, but Mr Kyle (letter, May 10) need not wait for the Prime Minister to thank Baroness Thatcher for that.

The insecure at work, those who find only low-paid, temporary or part-time work, the thousands of homeless, the countless unemployed, the millions who have been reduced to living below the poverty line, those who have lost their businesses and homes and the many more who became victims of the Baroness's visionary and zealous reforms can do the thanking instead.

Yours faithfully,
CARLOS LARREA,
15 Glenaele Road, SW16.
May 10.

Tory leadership

From Mr Christopher Belton

Sir, What a thoroughly nauseating spectacle some contenders for the Tory leadership are presenting to the public. I find it astonishing that they seem unaware that they are presenting — with proof — if it were needed — of how wise we were not to re-elect them.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,
CHRISTOPHER BELTON,
45 Heathfield Green,
Midhurst, West Sussex.
May 14.

Blooming bluebells

From Mr Brian Parker

Sir, The fine display of bluebells in a wider part of my garden prompts me to read again your recent Science Briefing ("Don't tread on the bluebells", April 28; see also letter, May 1) on the susceptibility of bluebells to the tread of feet. It concludes that these plants are easily damaged and their sustainability is threatened by trampling.

I find it difficult to believe. In my drive unwanted bluebells appear year on year, thrusting up through compacted shale and stone chippings. They are subject to the occasional car tyre, trampling feet, path-clearing chemicals and being chopped back with a spade. But none of this makes any difference; they come up again as vigorously as ever.

As a result of your article, I think I will not take the spade to them this year but collect the seed for distribution to those disappointed with their weaker specimens.

Yours sincerely,
B. H. PARKER,
Rook House,
Victoria Road,
Dartmouth, Devon.
May 14.

Drama at the Royal Opera

From Ms Genista McIntosh

Sir, I am extremely dismayed by the speculation which has followed my resignation from the Royal Opera House (article, Arts, May 14), and in particular at the entirely unfounded suggestion that there have been disagreements between the board and myself.

There have been no such disagreements, nor has there been any conflict with the Chairman, Lord Chaulingford. On the contrary, I received enormous support and encouragement from him throughout my time as chief executive, for which I am deeply grateful, as I am for his personal kindness.

The decision to leave was mine alone. The statement issued by the Royal Opera House (report, May 14) tells all there is to tell.

Yours faithfully,
GENISTA MCINTOSH,
Royal Opera House,
Covent Garden, WC2.
May 14.

From the Chairman of the Arts Council

Sir, In commenting on the changes at the Royal Opera House, Rodney Milnes lumps me, and others, as "yesterday's men". He might also have pointed out that the Secretary of State, very much today's man, was informed by the Royal Opera House about their decision to waive their due process of selection in respect of Mary Allen as new chief executive. Given the nature of the emergency, he expressed a supportive view.

I do believe the Royal Opera House was right and, though the loss of Mary Allen is a blow to her good work here, it will make this difficult to handle than it otherwise might be.

Yours faithfully,
GOWRIE,
Chairman,
The Arts Council of England,
14 Great Peter Street, SW1.
May 14.

From Mr Christopher Joubert

Sir, When public bodies stop performing their functions properly, administrative (and sometimes legislative) action is needed to abolish or radically reform them.

I would say that it has now become blindingly obvious that the present organisation of the Royal Opera House is disastrous. The Secretary of State responsible for the arts should certainly take the decisive action characteristic of this Government in its first fortnight and, in Rodney Milnes's words "throw the whole lot of them out". In looking for a team to take over, he should consider radical alternatives.

Improved management is one of the objectives of the private finance initiative. The operation and maintenance of the ROH, including its refurbishment, would be an appropriate first task for a new team engaged under a reformed PFI.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTOPHER JOUBERT,
48 Haydon Park Road,
Wimbledon, SW19.
May 14.

And the good news

From Ms Lynn Mallet

Sir, In Valerie Groves's (as usual, excellent) interview with the splendid Frank Field (May 9) one quotation stands out: "Our aim must be to make [people] so happy that we can win their support for other people less fortunate."

Governments have tried, with great success, to keep us anxious, envious, guilty, insecure and running frantically to stay in the same place financially. Never have I heard one actually wish any of us happiness. The best of luck to Mr Field in this wholly admirable goal.

Yours, frankly amazed,
LYNN MALLET,
2 Playfair Mansions,
Queen's Club Gardens, W14.
May 11.

US perspective

From Commander John H. Bothwell, US Navy (ret)

Sir, Thirty years ago, while I was pursuing a course of graduate studies in political science in America, the perceived wisdom across the Pond was: Britain experiences her best government when a Labour programme is administered by the Tories.

Is this proposition about to be reversed?

Sincerely yours,
JOHN H. BOTHWELL,
79 Pheasant Walk, Oxford.
May 13.

Dotty dons?

From Professor George D. W. Smith, FRS

Sir, Shame on you for stereotyping Trinity dons as "the... most eccentric intellectuals of [the] generation" (leading article, May 5).

It is really so eccentric to recruit the most talented young people, regardless of their background, and to encourage them to reach their potential in academic, social and sporting terms? To cherish the beautiful surroundings we have inherited, and seek to erect 20th-century buildings of which future generations can be proud? To husband our resources, and pass on to our successors a healthy and flourishing institution?

If so, then I'm a little worried about what you would regard as "normal" behaviour.

Yours faithfully,
GEORGE SMITH
(Fellow),
Trinity College, Oxford.
May 5.

Letters to the Editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046.

Spoils of war

From Major Alvin Tull (ret)

Sir, Sally Trousdell should count herself lucky she is a civilian observer of her husband's passion for military correctness (letter, May 10). Times were for some of us that his wisdom had to be learned by heart and repeated on demand — often in foul weather on Salisbury Plain.

I would urge her to pay greater attention lest she be informed, as I was, that the term "career" meant going downhill out of control.

Treasure him, Sally, he's a great man.
Yours faithfully,
ALVIN TULL,
10 Carvers Cottages,
Brockenhurst, Hampshire.
May 10.

corner. Ah!" So mused Mr. Dowler as he listened to the watchman in the crescent; and then he too turned the corner and fell fast asleep. The hay-cutting machine has something of the same sun-dormant effect. When it returns from the dim regions at the end of the field it may grow louder in vain, finding that we, like Mr. Dowler, have slipped away, "into the arms of Porpus" ... More stirring, but still possessing an essentially serene and placid quality, is another sound, just now beginning to be heard, that of cricket. "You put the bat against the ball" is said to have been a simple recipe; and the ring of somebody swinging a mallet reverberating faintly pursuing the great teacher, like no other in the world. The lawn tennis ball has by comparison a paltry ping, like that of the mosquito calling for its prey. The note of the cricket ball is, as Zerkow said of his beloved dynamite, "deep-mouthed and unctuously solemn." And yet with all its dignity it combines an exemplified cheerfulness. It cannot but revive the spirits.

THE TIMES

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BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

THURSDAY MAY 15 1997

Recount to go ahead as jobless tally falls

By Philip Bassett
INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

THE Government yesterday confirmed that it would review the official unemployment figures as it announced a further 59,400 drop in the number of people out of work and claiming benefit.

Labour has criticised the unemployment statistics as "fiddled figures", but in trying to improve them the Government runs the risk of presiding over a nominal rise in unemployment.

Despite that, as fore-shadowed in *The Times* this week, ministers yesterday announced a rapid review of the official figures, to be carried out by the Office for National Statistics.

Andrew Smith, Employment Minister, said if policies aimed at helping the unemployed to find jobs were to succeed, they had to be based on accurate statistics. He said: "Credibility must be restored to the official unemployment statistics. I very much welcome the opportunity to review this information through the announcement by the ONS of a public consultation on labour market statistics."

The ONS, which is already reviewing the presentation of the Government's unemployment figures, will use the opportunity of Mr Smith's announcement to re-argue the case for the monthly count of unemployed benefit claimants being supplemented by a monthly version of the statistically measured Labour Force Survey measure of unemployment.

Claimant unemployment dropped to a near seven-year low yesterday, the ONS said, with a 59,400 fall in seasonally adjusted claimant unemployment to 1,651,400, or 5.9 per cent of the workforce. The fall was the fourteenth successive monthly drop.

But earnings pressures eased as the increase in average earnings held steady at 4.5 per cent, after last month's figure was revised downwards by 0.5 percentage points.



Helen Liddell with, from left, Sir Andrew Large, Andrew Winkler and Colette Bowe, laid down the rules to life office chiefs and financial advisers

Green resolution makes Shell's board see red

By Carl Mortished

THE environmental lobby claimed a major victory yesterday when more than 10 per cent of investors in Shell voted for a radical overhaul of the oil company's stance on green issues.

At Shell's annual meeting in London they supported a resolution, sponsored by church groups, that called on Shell to improve the monitoring of its environmental performance and to conduct an external audit of its environmental policies. It was firmly opposed by the board.

The resolution, which was defeated by a margin of less than eight to one, is believed to have garnered support from employee trustees of pension funds and private shareholders. However, large insurance companies, including the Prudential, as well as leading fund management groups, are thought to have opposed it.

The oil company has been lobbying pension funds and

insurers. The argument between Shell and its critics has highlighted the growing conflict over the power of shareholders and the board's right to manage the company.

Shareholders who arrived at the packed annual meeting in Westminster were greeted by noisy supporters from environmental groups such as Friends of the Earth and supporters of the imprisoned Ogoni activists in Nigeria.

John Jennings, chairman of Shell's UK parent company, quickly issued a statement indicating that he shared the sentiments behind the resolution and said: "I also accept that external verification of performance is in principle desirable." However, he said it was inappropriate to seek external verification of board policies. "We have a problem in the concept of auditing policy. We cannot share this ultimate responsibility."

The resolution was sponsored by the Ecumenical Council for Corporate Respon-

sibility and other church-based groups which make up less than 1 per cent of the oil company's shares. It requested that a director be appointed to implement environmental policy; internal procedures to monitor policy; external review and audit of policies; regular reports to shareholders and a report on Nigeria.

The Rev John Hall, of the



Protesters claimed victory

ECCR, said supporters of the resolution were not hot-headed activists. "We are concerned that our company should do and be seen to be doing what is right. Our company should not be like a coal-effect fire assiduously polished by public relations consultants."

Referring to the board's opposition, he said: "This is a sledgehammer being used to crack a nut, but this soon has taken root and the landscape will be transformed."

A private shareholder asked the board why it was opposing the resolution when an audit of the Brent Spar platform had been a success for the company, resulting in a formal apology and retraction from Greenpeace of its allegations.

Action by the TUC may have been crucial: the organisation requested that its panel of employee trustees cast their votes at the Shell AGM rather than leaving it to fund managers. An oil analyst at a leading stockbroker said he was get-

ting more calls from clients asking about the environmental policies of companies.

Pric, the pension fund consultancy that became a thorn in the side of British Gas over boardroom pay, provided a platform for environmental groups. Anne Simpson, of Pric, said the result was a success and that Pric would continue to push Shell to adopt international environmental standards.

Commentary, page 27

Liddell warns pension firms

By Robert Miller

SENIOR executives from 28 firms that mis-sold personal pension plans were yesterday ordered by a government minister to report back to the Treasury within a month on plans to speed up compensation payments to more than 550,000 victims.

Helen Liddell, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, told the leaders of the life offices and independent advisers that delays in compensating investors were "simply unacceptable". She added: "It is the ordinary man or woman in the street who is being hurt by their foot-dragging."

In a tense 20-minute Whitehall meeting yesterday, Ms Liddell, sitting with Sir Andrew Large and Andrew Winkler, the chairman and the chief executive of the Securities and Investments Board (SIB), the chief city watchdog, and Colette Bowe, head of the Personal Investment Authority, which is overseeing the £4 billion mis-selling review, laid down the rules.

The minister warned the life offices that if they were unable to convince the Treasury of their "sincerity" in completing the review, the Government will "take their conduct into account in its reform of financial services regulation". This could lead to a much tougher disciplinary regime as well as exclusion from taking part in the expected multibillion-pound market of long-term retirement and healthcare plans.

The first step in the planned legal reforms is expected to be the announcement shortly of a new SIB chairman to replace Sir Andrew, who stands down at the end of July. The new SIB chief will then oversee the creation of one overarching City regulator prior to new financial services legislation.

Commentary, page 27

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET
INDICES

FTSE 100	4686.9	(-4.1)
Yield	3.47%	
FTSE All share	2228.79	(-1.87)
Nikkei	2209.72	(+90.51)
Dow Jones	7312.12	(+37.91)
S&P Composite	836.88	(+2.75)

US RATE

Federal Funds...	5 1/4%	(5 1/4%)
Long Bond	96 3/8%	(96 3/8%)
Yield	6.88%	(6.92%)

LONDON MONEY

3-mth interbank	6 1/2%	(6 1/2%)
Libor long gilt	11 1/4%	(11 1/4%)

STERLING

New York	1.6403	(1.6332)
London		
\$	1.6405	(1.6319)
DM	5.7287	(5.7073)
FF	9.5989	(9.5285)
SP	2.3631	(2.3445)
Yen	194.11	(194.19)
S index	98.3	(98.5)

DOLLAR

London		
DM	1.7000	(1.6935)
FF	5.7287	(5.7073)
SP	1.4390	(1.4360)
Yen	118.30	(118.60)
S index	103.1	(103.4)

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (Jul)	\$19.25	(\$19.50)
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GOLD

London close	\$349.05	(\$348.05)
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* denotes midday trading price

Dillon Read talks fail

ADVANCED takeover talks between ING Barings and Dillon Read, the private US investment bank, broke down last night after a mystery bidder entered the fray with a higher offer.

The identity of the possible buyer is unclear but on Wall Street speculation had SBC Warburg emerging as the front-runner with NationsBank and Kleinwort Dresdner also interested.

Buoyant sales lift shares in Safeway

By Sarah Cunningham

SHARES in Safeway, the supermarket group, surged 7 per cent yesterday after it reported more buoyant than expected sales.

The company said it is to hire 1,600 extra staff for its new supermarkets in the next year at a cost of £10 million. Together it is to take on 8,000 more staff over the next two years.

In the two March 29, total sales increased by 8.7 per cent to £7.07 billion, while at comparable stores, the increase was 4.7 per cent. The sector average is between 3

and 3.5 per cent. The shares, which fell sharply after a profit warning in February and which have remained weak on doubts about the company's trading performance, rose 23 1/2 p to close at 354 1/2 p.

Pre-tax profit last year fell to £420.6 million from £429.4 million. Earnings per share edged ahead from 26.4p to 26.8p and the final dividend of 9.7p (8.7p), payable on August 4, gives a full-year payout of 14.1p (12.75p).

Chains make gains, page 29

NI fraud campaign could breach human rights law

By Jason Nisse

PLANS to raise around £450 million a year through a crackdown on self-employed people not paying National Insurance are to be announced shortly by Harriet Harman, Secretary of State for Social Security.

However, the move could see the Department of Social Security breaching the European Convention on Human Rights, which the Government announced yesterday would be incorporated into British law.

Ms Harman will announce

that her department is to use the controversial data-matching provisions introduced in the Social Security Administration (Fraud) Act. This allows the DSS to cross-check the Inland Revenue's Schedule D returns from the self-employed with payment records at the Contributions Agency, part of the DSS.

According to *Computer Weekly*, the Revenue has already downloaded files into a system that can be matched with the agency's records. This will net an estimated 1.5

million self-employed who are not paying National Insurance, bringing in an estimated £450 million a year.

The move will be the first of a series of fraud crackdowns using powers in the Act that only became law in March.

However, Liberty, the civil liberties group, has obtained legal opinion that says use of the data-matching provisions would contravene the European Convention on Human Rights as it would allow a body other than the Revenue access to personal tax records.

Airtours shares take off as bookings boom

By Jon Ashworth



Crossland: improvement

SHARES in Airtours, the tour operator, jumped sharply yesterday on the back of strong bookings, and a markedly improved financial performance.

The shares rose 30p, to 974 1/2 p, on word that summer bookings are 23.5 per cent up on 1996, compared with an increase of 14.3 per cent for the industry. The seasonal pre-tax loss narrowed to £12.7 million, from a £22.9 million loss, in the six months to March 31, on turnover up 34 per cent, to £518.4 million. Losses per share eased to 8.18p (loss: 16.17p). There is an interim dividend of 4p (3.25p).

Full-priced UK brochure sales are well

ahead of 1996, leaving less stock to shift. UK bookings for winter 1997/1998 are 49.7 per cent ahead of last year.

David Crossland, chairman and chief executive, said there had been "significant improvement" in both the UK and Scandinavian markets. He added: "We have been able to take full advantage of these improvements and have continued the geographic expansion of our business."

The results include a full six months' trading from Simon Spies Holding, based in Scandinavia, and Altha Tours International, of Canada.

Airtours has expanded aggressively to try to boost overseas earnings, and now derives close to half of its earnings from

abroad. It hopes to derive a third of earnings from the UK, a third from North America (largely Canada), and a third from the rest of the world.

Airtours and its 29 per cent shareholder, Carnival Corporation, an American cruise operator, have been cleared by competition authorities to proceed with the purchase of a sizeable stake in Costa Crociere, an Italian cruise line. The companies are jointly expected to pay £168 million for a 57 per cent stake.

UK tour operations saw interim losses ease to £9.6 million (loss: £17.9 million), aided by better trading conditions in October, final month of the 1996 summer season, and a good start to winter.

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LABOUR'S BILLS FOR BUSINESS IN THE QUEEN'S SPEECH

In a dramatic shift from the old "beer and sandwiches" tradition, it has emerged that Tony Blair, the Prime Minister, consulted business leaders before writing the Queen's Speech but has yet to sit down with senior trade unionists since winning the election two weeks ago (Philip Bassett writes). In the speech yesterday, it was made clear that a "new

partnership with business" would be at the heart of Labour's plans "to build a modern and dynamic economy to improve the competitiveness of British industry". The Prime Minister's office held talks with a team from the Confederation of British Industry, led by Sir Colin Marshall, its president, and Adair Turner, Director-General, last Wednesday,

only the second full working day for the new Government. The Prime Minister said he looked for support from business to help deliver Labour's programme in Government. The CBI presented to the Prime Minister and to Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, a three-page letter setting out technical issues for business arising from the Intergovernmental

Conference before the European Union summit in Amsterdam next month. The TUC confirmed that John Monks, its General Secretary, has not yet met Mr Blair for talks in Downing Street, though officials indicated they had spoken by telephone. The TUC said it was not overly concerned that Mr Blair had met business leaders before the unions.

'New deal' on jobs and low pay targeted

By Philip Bassett, Industrial Editor

THE Government's welfare-to-work plans and proposals for a national minimum wage are at the core of its employment programme outlined in the Queen's Speech.

A special cabinet committee led by Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, and David Blunkett, Education and Employment Secretary, met yesterday to set the shape of the radical policies.

The Queen's Speech said the Government was pledged to "mount a fundamental attack upon youth and long-term unemployment" by bringing forward measures aimed at moving 250,000 young people off benefits and into work.

Developing a new line in agencies

THE Government intends to set up a string of regional development offices modelled on the Northern Development Company, which has lured 400 businesses to the North of England (Elizabeth Stephens writes).

Unlike the state-funded Scottish and Welsh development bodies, the NDC was set up on local initiative and is funded by business, trade unions, local government and colleges. Although the Scottish and Welsh quangos have attracted a stream of successful businesses, they have not been noted for their cost effectiveness.

After a consultation period this summer, a regional development budget will be created by redeploying funds from existing programmes. Bids will then be invited from local consortiums, and the agencies should be operating within two years.

financed by a one-off windfall levy on the "excess" profits of the privatised utilities.

Under the "new deal" on jobs, young people out of work for six months or more will be offered a private-sector job, with employers able to obtain a subsidy of £60 a week for six months; or a job in the voluntary sector; or a job with the Government's planned environmental task force; or full-time education or training. Long-term unemployed out of work for two or more years will also be helped by offering employers a subsidy of £75 a week for six months to take them on.

The Queen's Speech also made a pledge to set up a Low Pay Commission, to be headed by Peter Jarvis, retiring chief executive of Whitbread and a recent convert to the idea of a minimum wage. It will be made up of employers, employees and independent experts and will meet on a non-statutory basis until its legal position is confirmed.

The Government will set a minimum wage level according to prevailing economic circumstances, after advice from the commission.

Rodney Bickerstaffe, general secretary of Unison, the biggest union which has long campaigned for a minimum wage, said that the measures were an excellent start. "For the first time we have a Government prepared to introduce a minimum wage and one which is going to tackle youth unemployment."

The Low Pay Unit pressure group said that six million full and part-time workers would benefit if the minimum wage was set at half male median earnings — which would mean £4.42 an hour — with the Exchequer set to gain £4 billion a year in benefit savings and increased tax and National Insurance receipts.



Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade: involved in late payment legislation

Go-ahead for late-payment Bill

By Adam Jones

LABOUR'S pre-election drive to display itself as the party for small businesses was confirmed with a commitment in the Queen's Speech to introduce a statutory right to interest on late payments.

The Fair Payment of Commercial Debts Bill was widely expected, having been listed in the party's manifesto. The details have not been firmed up and will be thrashed out in consultations with business groups, many of whom are doubtful that legislation will improve the lot of small companies.

Thresholds will have to be agreed on the size of the company that is protected by

legislation, if it is not to be extended to all firms. It is likely that interest on recurring small debts will be able to be rolled into a bigger claim.

A deadline for claims will be set. The Forum of Private Business, which represents

24,000 companies and has twice drafted a sample Bill, said it wants companies to be able to claim outstanding interest for up to six years.

It said this would let smaller companies delay making a fuss until a time when it will

Blair hails Bank move

TONY BLAIR yesterday said that giving the Bank of England operational freedom is necessary because "the Government shouldn't be able to play politics with people's mortgages" (Alasdair Murray writes). Mr Blair's comment came after a Bank of England Bill, to let the Bank set interest rates on a month-to-month

basis, was included in the Queen's Speech. Under the reform, the Government will appoint four new members to the Bank's monetary policy committee, and a second deputy governor. A mini-Budget is expected on June 10. The main proposals for it are a windfall tax on utilities and a cut in VAT on fuel.

Consumers can sue over issues of competition

By Christine Buckley, Industrial Correspondent

CONSUMERS and businesses will have the right to sue companies over anti-competitive behaviour, and transgressors will face stiff fines in legal action by the Director-General of Fair Trading under a new Competition Bill.

It will mark the first time companies will be liable to pay damages to their customers for anti-competitive action. The Government believes that this, along with fines that can be levied by the OFT, will provide a stronger deterrent against competition transgressions.

The Bill, which will give the OFT tougher powers to investigate alleged transgressors, will move the UK into line with European competition law. Legislation will replace the Restrictive Trade Practices Act with a ban on anti-competitive agreements.

The level of fines and the legal processes by which they can be implemented will be looked at in a consultation led by Lord Bore.

In a three-man team with John Vickers of Shell and Brian Sanderson of BP, Lord Bore will lead talks with industry on how the bill can be enforced. An independent body will be established to hear appeals from companies facing punitive action.

not damage a trading relationship. Many business groups are worried that laws will be neutralised by the fear of losing business.

The OFT also wants late payers to have to publish the amount of interest they could be charged if the right to compensation was invoked. It said the extra auditing fees and the public embarrassment would encourage punctuality.

The Department of Trade and Industry, headed by Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, confirmed yesterday that the legislation will not improve small companies' access to courts, a measure being sought by some opponents to legislation.

Brussels approves BT's £13bn deal

THE European Commission yesterday approved British Telecom's £13 billion takeover of MCI America, the largest transatlantic merger, after the companies agreed to certain minor concessions. The merger, which will create a global powerhouse to compete with AT&T and Deutsche Telekom, still requires regulatory clearance in the US. This is expected in the autumn. BT and MCI met the Commission's conditions by agreeing to sell MCI's relatively small teleconferencing business in Britain. They also agreed to sell some capacity on their transatlantic submarine cables to other operators to avoid strengthening their dominant position in the US-to-UK call market.

The US Federal Communications Commission is expected to place tougher conditions on the BT-MCI merger. AT&T, America's largest long-distance phone company, has said the deal should not be approved unless BT can prove that the UK telecoms market does not discriminate against foreign competitors. The merged company, to be called Concord, will have headquarters in London and Washington and its shares will trade on the London and New York stock exchanges. BT will continue to trade under its own name in Britain.

BAA traffic grows 6%

A RUN of late Easter holidays helped BAA, the UK airport operator, to attract a 6 per cent increase in passenger volumes last month. More than eight million passengers went through BAA airports. Growth was led by Stansted Airport, which saw passenger traffic rise 7.3 per cent, with Heathrow Airport up 5.6 per cent on the strength of an upturn in European scheduled flights. Total tonnage of cargo rose 6.7 per cent compared with the same month of 1996. Shares in BAA gained 9½p to 539p, close to their best ever.

Airlines in \$42bn link-up

UNITED AIRLINES, Lufthansa, Thai Airways, Air Canada and SAS have joined forces to create a global alliance with combined sales of \$42.3 billion. Varig and South African Airways are tipped to join the so-called Star Alliance, which will feature code-sharing on flights. The news brought a swift response from American Airlines and British Airways, who urged their respective governments to approve their planned link-up. Opponents say the BA-AA alliance will create a stranglehold on key air routes between Europe and North America.

Vardey joins Fidelity

GILES VARDEY, the former director at the London Stock Exchange who lost out in the battle to succeed Michael Lawrence as chief executive last year, is to join Fidelity Brokerage Services as president and chief executive in June. The appointment is a coup for FBS, which recently reopened for business after a six-month ban and a £200,000 fine imposed by the Securities and Futures Authority. As head of markets development at the exchange, Mr Vardey did the groundwork for the electronic order book due to be introduced in October.

Utilitec predicts fall

UTILITEC, the water and gas measurement company, has warned it is to plunge into the red just four weeks after raising £12 billion on the market. The company, which changed its name from Cruden Bay after a reverse takeover by Technogal on April 17, said a delay in orders would leave a loss this year against the £800,000 profit expected by the market. Analysts now expect a loss of £1 million. Its shares, offered at 90p during the fundraising, slid 3p to 73½p. The London head office is being closed at a cost of £800,000.

Plea for water meters

THE water regulator has called for water companies to encourage greater use of meters. Ian Byatt said that charges for meters were too high in many areas in spite of "widespread" customer support for the principle of paying for water according to the amount of water you use. Mr Byatt forecast that more than one in ten customers would have a meter by the end of the year. The average cost of installation has halved since last year, to £33, according to the watchdog's report on water company tariffs. Twelve companies fit meters free.

BG announces oil find

BG EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION, part of the former British Gas group, yesterday announced an oil discovery in the North Sea, but said that it was too early to give an estimate of the reserves. This was the first well to be drilled by BG Exploration and Production in this particular North Sea block, which is operated in conjunction with two other producers, Amerasia Hess and Rigel Petroleum. Planning work for an appraisal well is in progress. BG has extensive oil interests in the North Sea and internationally.

Caradon gives warning

CARADON, the building products company, warned that a triple whammy of the strong pound, a competitive American market and the lack of a contribution from businesses sold last year would hit first half profits in 1997. Anthony Hitchens, chairman, said that the group's businesses were nevertheless generally making progress. Caradon was forced into a radical restructuring, selling £220 million of non-core businesses. Yesterday shareholders approved a plan to hand back £174 million of the proceeds via a share buyback.

Reckitt remains robust

RECKITT & COLEMAN, the household products group, said that its performance in the first four months of this financial year remains robust although, as with other exporters, the strength of sterling remains an issue. Alan Dalby, chairman, told the annual meeting yesterday that he was confident that "the underlying momentum of 1996 will continue and the planned investments for brand development and growth will remain your board's priority". The positive words sent Reckitt's shares 10p higher to 905p.

Horlick in line for £1m job

By Robert Miller

NICOLA HORLICK, the former Morgan Grenfell fund manager, could earn up to £1 million a year when he joins Société Générale, France's largest fund manager, in London.

Ms Horlick is to link up with John Richards, currently head of investment for UK institutions at Mercury Asset Management (MAM). The

two managers began their City careers at MAM 14 years ago and will now spearhead Société Générale's bid to become a leading player in the UK pension fund management business.

Mr Richards, 36, will be managing director of the new subsidiary which will start with £55 billion to look after. Ms Horlick, who was sus-

pended from her senior post at Morgan Grenfell amid allegations of staff poaching and subsequently left claiming constructive dismissal, yesterday declined to comment. A close friend of Ms Horlick said: "Nicola had a lot of options to consider. She feels that the Société Générale offer is the best one."

Patrick Pagni, chief execu-

tive of Société Générale UK and chairman of the new asset management arm, said he hoped to sign up Ms Horlick by mid-June.

M Pagni said: "We are prepared to pay market prices for the right staff but not over the top and we will invest solidly in the business so that we become a factor to be reckoned with in this sector."

Merrydown turns Two Dogs loose

By Alasdair Murray

MERRYDOWN has been forced to pass distribution rights for Two Dogs, its aleopop brand, to Scottish & Newcastle after sales tumbled in the final quarter.

The cider company admitted that it had been unable to maintain distribution and provide sufficient advertising back-up in the increasingly competitive aleopop market. Scottish & Newcastle will buy Two Dogs from Merrydown, which continues to own the rights, and distribute and market the product itself.

Merrydown shares, which hit 140½p last year, fell more than 15 per cent to close at 75½p. Analysts cut full-year profit forecasts by about 40 per cent to £850,000.

Two Dogs started the craze for aleopops when it was launched two years ago. The brand remains the second-biggest seller but has lost ground rapidly to the market

leader, Hooper's Hooch, owned by Bass, and has been delisted by a number of off-trade outlets.

Merrydown said that it would now be able to concentrate on promoting its ciders and Schlor grape juice, and implementing a cost-cutting programme.



Two Dogs: changes ahead

Non-executives' pay soars

By Jon Ashworth

FEES paid to non-executive directors have risen by between 15 and 20 per cent in the past two years, and are set for further steep increases, according to a survey of more than 500 UK company chairmen.

The average remuneration for a non-executive director devoting 11 to 20 days a year to a company with turnover of £25 million or less is £12,800, up from £11,200 two years ago. Those devoting the same amount of time to a company with turnover of £2 billion or more earn £25,300, against £20,900 in 1994.

The average daily rate for a UK non-executive director is £800 to £1,500. Company chairmen expect fees to con-

tinue rising at about 10 per cent a year.

Yve Newbold, chief executive of Pro-Net, which specialises in non-executive recruitment, said that the rises were less excessive than they appeared, since they were from a relatively modest base.

Ms Newbold, former company secretary of Hanson, and a non-executive director of BT, said: "The job is getting harder, it's getting more complex for the non-executive, and we are spending more time on it."

In larger companies, the average number of days devoted per year by non-executives has risen from 16 to 27. The recommendations of

the Cadbury and Greenbury committees on corporate governance are now widely embraced by listed companies, according to the research. Non-executives now comprise half the board in companies of all sizes, on average, an increase on two years ago.

Looking ahead, 46 per cent of respondents favoured candidates with overseas experience, and 38 per cent favoured women candidates, of whom there remains a shortage.

Pro-Net jointly commissioned the survey with the Board for Chartered Accountants in Business, part of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.

	Buy	Sell
Australia \$	2.20	2.04
Canada \$	20.25	19.00
Denmark \$	26.00	25.67
France F	2.384	2.259
Germany DM	0.670	0.683
Italy L	1.115	1.032
Japan ¥	0.81	0.82
Spain P	2.54	2.71
Sweden S	4.70	4.43
Switzerland S	15.40	12.27
Taiwan NT\$	1.13	1.04
UK £	2.00	2.00
US \$	0.88	0.89
Yen ¥	20.20	19.70
Malta M	0.009	0.009
New Zealand \$	0.715	0.698
Portugal P	20.00	19.20
South Africa R	0.508	0.511
Spain P	24.00	22.50
Sweden S	13.22	12.10
Switzerland S	2.21	2.10
Taiwan NT\$	22.75	21.67
UK £	1.78	1.802

LEGAL & PUBLIC NOTICES

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LEGAL NOTICES

ELECTRICITY NOTICES

Scottish Hydro-Electric plc

Notice of an application for consent to construct a Combined Heat and Power Plant at Smeeth Townsland Hook Paper Mill, Smeeth, Kent.

Notice is hereby given that Scottish Hydro-Electric plc has applied under section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989, for the consent of the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry to construct a Combined Heat and Power plant at the Smeeth Townsland Hook Paper Mill, Smeeth, Kent and for a direction under section 90(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, that planning permission for the development be deemed to be granted.

Scottish Hydro-Electric plc has an agreement with Smeeth Townsland Hook to develop a project with a view to building, owning and operating a Combined Heat and Power plant on land wholly within the Smeeth Townsland Hook Paper Mill.

The Combined Heat and Power plant, which will be gas fired, would have an electrical output of up to 60MW and a steam output of 132 tons per hour and would replace existing plant which currently supplies the steam and electrical requirements of the Smeeth Townsland Hook Paper Mill.

A copy of the application, with a plan showing the land to which it relates, together with a copy of the Environmental Statement and non-technical summary discussing the Company's proposals in more detail and presenting an analysis of the environmental implications, are available for inspection during normal office hours at the following addresses:

Tunbridge and Malling Council, The Air Station, West Malling, Kent.
Kent County Council, Springfield, Maidstone, Kent.
Smeeth Townsland Hook Paper Mill, Smeeth, Kent.

Copies of the Environmental Statement and Non-Technical Summary are also available for inspection at the public libraries at Smeeth and West Malling. In addition, copies of the Environmental Statement can be obtained from The Benn Willmore Planning Partnership, Intercol House, 1 Colindale Lane, Cambridge, CB1 3EP, at a cost of £20 per copy.

Any objections should be made in writing to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, Electricity Division, Room 1E.20, 1 Victoria Street, London, SW1H 0ET, stating the name of the objector and grounds of objection, not later than 20 June 1997.

EXPRESS TRUST COLLECTION

(In Liquidation)
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT S.D. SHARPLEY, FCA of London, Chartered Accountant, has been appointed Liquidator of the above named Company by the Members and Creditors on 12th May 1997. Dated: 15th May 1997. Peter S. Duns, Secretary, Liquidation.

The Insolvency Act 1986

(In Liquidation)
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT PETER ADAMS, FCA of London, Chartered Accountant, has been appointed Liquidator of the above named Company by the Members and Creditors on 12th May 1997. Dated: 15th May 1997. Peter S. Duns, Secretary, Liquidation.

The Insolvency Act 1986

(In Liquidation)
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT PETER ADAMS, FCA of London, Chartered Accountant, has been appointed Liquidator of the above named Company by the Members and Creditors on 12th May 1997. Dated: 15th May 1997. Peter S. Duns, Secretary, Liquidation.

LEGAL, PUBLIC, COMPANY & PARLIAMENTARY NOTICES

TO PLACE NOTICES FOR THIS SECTION PLEASE TELEPHONE 0171-782 7344 OR FAX: 0171-481 9313

Notices are subject to conditions and should be accepted by 2.30pm two days prior to insertion.

Business ethics don't travel well



COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

Shell is not the evil corporate monster that the protesters would have us believe, but it must rank as a public relations disaster area. Only British Gas at its worst could challenge the oil giant's ability to incompetently handle criticism and spectacularly turn its detractors into heroes and its directors into incompetents. The fact that 11 per cent of Shell's shareholders were persuaded to vote against the company's board yesterday was a huge blow to the company and carries a strong message to industry generally. Not long ago it would have been unthinkable for the bulk of Shell's shares to have taken such a stand. But for the opposition to have reached that level means that some substantial funds voted for change. The grey men who run the institutional funds joined with small shareholders to deliver a drastic condemnation of the company.

They were responding to a powerful cocktail of clever lobbying from pressure groups and appalling arrogance and poor judgment from Shell. It was the same combination that turned Shell into an international pariah over its wish to dispose of the Brent Spar oil platform. In the end, Friends of the Earth had to admit that some of the allegations levelled against the company during that debacle had been ill-founded, but by then Shell had been indelibly marked as environmentally unsound. Its latest dispute centred on

environmental issues again, this time in Nigeria, and coupled with complicated criticisms of its attitude towards human rights. The company is probably no more blameworthy than most international giants on these scores and probably less so than many. However, its inept response has left it looking guilty and given the likes of the holier-than-thou Anita Roddick a chance to kick a multinational when it's down. Despite their colourful allegations, the protesters, led by the highly sophisticated Anne Simpson of PIRC, who makes a living out of engineering corporate discomfort, sought to challenge the annual meeting on a relatively narrow point, asking for monitoring of Shell's environmental and human rights policies and external auditing.

Chairman John Jennings actually told the meeting that he shared the sentiments behind the resolution — a little more of that attitude earlier on might have averted a great deal of trouble. He was able, with some justification, to tell shareholders that the company has been publishing its statement of business principles for two decades, and remains proud of them. But external auditing was not on. That was not enough to appease the protesters. The demand for external auditing will grow, as a younger generation fired up over environmental issues and convinced that big business is exploitative overseas, becomes more vociferous.

What Shell avoided saying is that international companies from other countries, and Nigerian firms themselves, have rather lower standards than theirs. By what rules should international companies be judged? That is the question that should be vexing the business ethics consultants who are beginning to spring up and would love the profit opportunity of conducting regular ethical audits.

Let us be grateful that Shell's foot-in-mouth merchants did not try to grapple with that one.

Welfare to work is just the job

The medium was an elderly lady reading from a prepared script, but the message for the business world was

rather more dynamic. The new Government has often proclaimed its desire to work with business, but let there be no doubt on whose terms.

Among its plethora of planned legislation, the Queen's Speech contained several measures which have little or no business support but which are, none the less, to go ahead. The strictures of the social chapter and potential burden of a minimum wage will soon be felt in Britain.

There is to be a liability to interest on late payment of debts, even though the CBI and Institute of Directors oppose the move and small firms organisations are divided on its viability. Barbara Roche, the new small firms' nanny, believes it will be good for her charges.

Utilities will have to come to terms with a tighter regime and the long-heralded windfall tax will rob Peter to fund Tony and Gordon's welfare-to-work scheme. But if this scheme is to stand any chance of success, then edicts from on high will not

suffice, even with the backing of legislation. The admirable idea of taking out-of-work youngsters and the long-term unemployed and putting them usefully to work will not be accomplished without huge commitment from employers: tax rebates may not be enough to encourage them to take on unqualified staff.

Providing training for an increasingly sophisticated workplace is an expensive exercise, particularly when the raw material can be depressingly undereducated in the first place. There are examples of companies that have made tremendous efforts in this direction, and been rewarded with high productivity and cheering profits: the pioneering schemes at Unipart, the privately owned car parts business, have been remarkably successful.

But if other companies are to be persuaded to make welfare to work a reality, a concerted push by business leaders will be required. If the CBI and the IoD really aim to have a constructive

relationship with the new Government, they should put what muscle they have behind the project, and companies should do likewise. Apart from the long-term benefits to the country, it would make constructive discussions on such fraught areas as competition policy and corporate taxation rather easier to achieve.

Perhaps the soon to be ennobled David Simon, with his well-spread portfolio, might find time to appraise his former colleagues in the world of big business of the merits of putting Labour's Big Idea into effect.

Littlewoods not yet out of the woods

Since James Ross took over as chairman of the Littlewoods Organisation, Britain's biggest privately owned company has had an exciting time. It has had an on-off-on deal with Sears to take over the Freemans mail order business, and set about selling its chain of high street stores. But buyers prepared to take on a portfolio of barely profitable down-market shops have not been rushing to agree a price of around £800 million. It seems that the company is now considering whether to shelve the total sale plan and

seek a joint venture partner to become involved in running some of the stores.

This would certainly appease members of the Littlewoods family, some of whom were known to be opposed to a break-up of the business with the inevitable consequent job losses. Staff at the Liverpool-based chain have a rather better long-service record than in many rival retail businesses and some family members, notably John Moores, a former chairman of the group, have been highly reluctant to see such loyalty jettisoned.

But if James Ross is to find a suitable joint-venture partner, he may need to cultivate a more accommodating style than he is said to have exhibited in his Sears talks. With Storehouse and Kingfisher both being cited as potential partners, the former Cable and Wireless chief will need all the negotiating skills he can muster.

Horlick watch

NICOLA HORLICK once opined that she must be the best known fund manager in the country. This is undeniably the case. It is debatable whether Société Générale deserves applause for its good sense in taking on such a high-profile individual or sympathy for what may ensue. But the firm would be well advised to ensure that doorkeepers at their head office in France see a photograph of the lady.

C&W faces delay in talks with China

By ERIC REGULY

CABLE and Wireless yesterday played down speculation that it would strike a deal with the Chinese Government over the future of Hongkong Telecom in time for the handover of the colony in July.

Dick Brown, chief executive, said: "There is no gun to our head... We don't feel compelled to be held to any date."

C&W hinted last month that it hoped to reach an agreement with the Chinese telecommunications authorities by July. The delay does not seem linked to any new hurdles. "We're talking in earnest," he said.

C&W owns 58.5 per cent of Hongkong Telecom — the most valuable company in its global portfolio. It generates about two thirds of C&W's operating profits and makes up about three quarters of its market capitalisation.

The Chinese, with 7.7 per cent of Hongkong Telecom, want C&W to reduce its stake

in the company. C&W is open to the idea, but wants better access to the vast Chinese telecoms market in return.

Lack of developments on the Hongkong Telecom front helped to push C&W shares down 14p to 498p. The City was also disappointed that the year-end results did not exceed forecasts. In the year to March 31, C&W reported a 12 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £1.42 billion on record turnover of £7 billion, up 13 per cent. Earnings per share were 30.3p, up 15 per cent.

The results were driven by an 11 per cent rise in operating profit at Hongkong Telecom, to £998 million, and a 31 per cent increase in operating profits at Mercury Communications, which is seeing the benefits of cost cutting.

The results mark Mercury's final contribution to the group. In April, Mercury became part of Cable and Wireless Communications, the phone and cable group that is 53 per cent owned by C&W.

Profits in the UK were held back by losses of more than £100 million at One-2-One, the mobile phone company that it jointly owns with US West. C&W would like to buy US West's 50 per cent interest in One-2-One and add its operations to Cable and Wireless Communications.

A final dividend of 7.7p (6.92p) is due on September 1. This lifts the total payout 11 per cent to 11.1p.



Brown: no deadline

Tempus, page 28

Investment boosts CU profits

By ADAM JONES

FIRST quarter pre-tax profits at Commercial Union rose to £102 million (£83 million), the insurer reported yesterday.

The figure, boosted by a £54 million increase in the amount of money realised from investments, fell in the middle of expectations and shares fell from 749p to 736p by mid-afternoon, exacerbated by the illiquidity of the stock.

Life assurance operating profits were £62 million, compared to £58 million in the first quarter of 1996. Adjusting for exchange-rate movements, the company said there was a 27 to 28 per cent underlying growth rate in life and pensions.

General insurance operating profits rose from £64 million to £67 million. The company said mild weather in the US and improved profitability in France and Australia more than compensated for increased general insurance competition in the UK.

Overall, premium income after reinsurance fell from £2.47 billion to £2.38 billion. At March 31, the group had £12 billion under management.

Circle ends listing as bid agreed

By ERIC REGULY

CIRCLE Communications ended a brief and troubled stint as a public company yesterday by accepting a £9.8 million takeover offer from Southern Star of Australia.

The Southern Star group is to pay 75p a share in cash for Circle, a television and cinema rights company. The offer represents an 11 per cent premium to Circle's closing price on Tuesday.

Circle came to the Alternative Investment Market last July at 170p a share. The shares initially rose, then plunged in February when the company sent out a profits warning and announced the departure of its finance director. Circle blamed delays in completing programming.

Peter Clark, Circle's chief executive, said: "The merged group has the potential to be a major player in the international rights business."

Circle's acceptance of the offer came as it reported pre-tax profit of £713,000 (£1.1 million) in the year to December 31. The shares closed up 7p to 75p.

THINK BIG

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STOCK MARKET

CLARE STEWART

Safeway shines as market ends record-setting run

LONDON'S record-breaking run faltered yesterday. After surging above 4,700 in the morning, close to Tuesday's record levels, the market went into a sharp reverse as profit-taking and a futures-led rally turned a 24-point gain into a 30-point deficit.

A strong opening on Wall Street, however, provided a valuable prop on a helter-skelter day. By the close, the FT-SE 100 had rallied to end just 4.1 points adrift, at 4,686.9.

Safeway led the FT-SE 100 with a rise of 23.5p, to 354.2p, after pleasing the City with better than expected like-for-like sales for the first six weeks of the year. More positive noises from brokers on the stock helped other groups in the sector, with Tesco adding 7p, to 387p, and Sainsbury edging up 2.5p, to 380.5p.

British Airways took off, rising 31p, to 742.5p, helped by expectations of approval for its American Airlines deal, boosted by news of a global alliance of United, British and Lufthansa.

BAA climbed 9.5p, to 539p, on April figures showing a 6 per cent increase in passenger numbers, with more than eight million using its airports.

With the holiday season imminent, the City warmed to Airtours, which announced a 45 per cent drop in seasonal losses and strong summer bookings. The shares jumped 30p, to 974p, as analysts upgraded full-year forecasts.

BP saw some activity as rumours spread that the Kuwaiti Investment Office was looking to place its 9.3 per cent stake in the oil group. Nothing concrete emerged to support the suggestion, but BP ended 2p up, at 744.5p, with more than eight million shares traded. Shell shares ended 2.5p lower, at £11.54, after the company's stormy AGM.

Profit-taking and disappointment at a lack of further news on the future of its 59 per cent stake in Hongkong Telecom hit Cable & Wireless, 14p lower, at 498.5p. A 12 per cent rise in pre-tax profits, to £1.42 billion, was in line with expectations.

BT shares dipped 3p, to 449.5p, in spite of the European Commission giving conditional approval to the group's £12 billion merger with MCI to form the world's second-biggest telecom company.

Shares in mobile phone



David Webster, Safeway chairman, and Colin Smith, chief executive, saw their stock go up yesterday

groups were affected by concern about the impact of higher charges for rent of communications frequencies. Although Vodafone described the change as negligible, its shares ended down 6.5p, at 275p. Orange closed 6.5p down, at 217p.

Centrica, the former trading arm of British Gas, moved up 2p, to 64.5p, on news of a gas delivery deal in Germany.

its first move overseas. BG stayed at 181.5p ahead of interim results today. Drinks groups lost their fizz on profit-taking, with Guinness down 12p, to 572.5p, and Grand Metropolitan 8.5p, to 567p. Allied Domecq ended 7.5p lower, at 456.5p.

Merrydown, the cider group, led 15p, to 75.5p, after warning that full-year results will be hit by a poor perfor-

mance from its Two Dogs alcoholic lemonade brand. Imperial Tobacco rose 2p, to 403.5p, after news of pre-tax profits of £143 million, in line with City forecasts. Sage, the computer services group, rose 1.5p, to 654p, after a 20 per cent rise in profits, to £19.3 million.

Profit warnings knocked Datatrach 49.5p lower, to 160p, and AIM-quoted Martin Shotton, the dairies group, 11p lower, to 86.5p. Rediff and Colman, the household products group, which has been on the end of bid speculation, put on 16p, to 905p. Its AGM was told that trading remains "robust".

United Biscuits, another name in the bid frame, rose 6.5p, to 228.5p.

Among second-liners, T&N, the engineering group, led the way, rising 8.5p, to 137p, on upbeat comments on trading. Further consideration of results from Danka Business Systems, the photocopy group, lifted its shares 3p, to 597.5p. While On Dezand Information, saw its price slide 6p, to a new low of 17p, after increased half-time losses.

Among media stocks, Scottish Radio rose 8.5p, to 405p, on news of record profits, up 39 per cent, to £4.5 million. Capital Radio was in demand ahead of results, putting on 15p, to 553.5p.

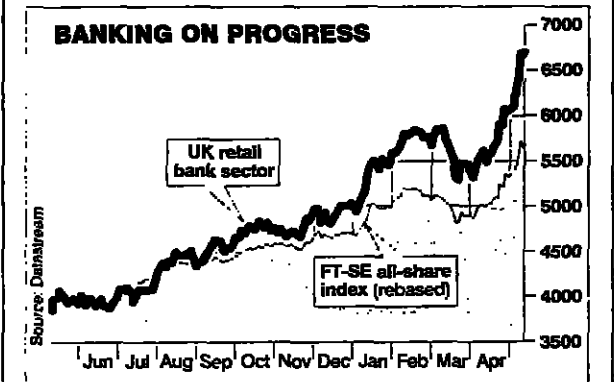
Scottish Television was sought after, rising 13.5p, to 697.5p. Yorkshire-Tyne Tees also drew support, ending at £11.37, up 22.5p.

Circle Communications, the AIM-quoted television rights company, rose 8p, to 75p, on news of an agreed £8.3 million bid from Southern Star.

Versatile, a new entrant, ended at 4p, a 1p premium on its placing price.

GILT-EDGED: Uneventful trading saw the market testing higher levels but lacking the strength to push prices significantly higher. The June long gilt ended up 0.5p, at £114.32, on Barter volumes of 74,000 contracts. Longs had the edge with Treasury 8 per cent 2015 up 0.7p, to £109.19. In shorts, Treasury 8 per cent 2000 ended up 0.1p, at £103.32.

NEW YORK: Wall Street shares fell back from opening highs prompted by lower than expected April inflation data. At midday, the Dow Jones industrial average was up 37.91, at 7,312.12.



TALK of big deals afoot in the banking sector this week has provided added impetus to a sector that outperformed the market in recent months. Abbey National, said by some to be in HSBC's sights, fell back, closing at 935p, off 22.5p, in the absence of any takeover activity.

In spite of some profit-taking in the sector, Barclays was in demand, on talk of restructuring at BZW, and moved up to a trading high of £12.77, before ending up at £12.53. Royal Bank of Scotland was also being bought, and added 7.5p to 657p by the close, while Alliance & Leicester rose 11p to 613p.

Before the arrival, traders expect the sector to remain buoyant. It is too early to start talking about taking profits, in spite of the recent rise, says one analyst. While the institutions remain underweight in the sector, there is further to go.

Insurers had a bumper ride with Commercial Union, GRE and Legal & General all squeezed by profit-taking.

COMMODITIES

LIFE			
Contract	Price	Change	Volume
May 1997	100.00	0.00	100.00
Jul 1997	100.00	0.00	100.00
Sep 1997	100.00	0.00	100.00
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Nov 2025	100.00	0.00	100.00
Jan 2026	100.00	0.00	100.00
Mar 2026	100.00	0.00	100.00
May 2026	100.00	0.00	100.00
Jul 2026	100.00	0.00	100.00
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Mar 2027	100.00	0.00	100.00
May 2027	100.00	0.00	100.00
Jul 2027	100.00	0.00	100.00
Sep 2027	100.00	0.00	100.00
Nov 2027	100.00	0.00	100.00
Jan 2028	100.00	0.00	100.00
Mar 2028	100.00	0.00	100.00
May 2028	100.00	0.00	100.00
Jul 2028	100.00	0.00	100.00
Sep 2028	100.00	0.00	100.00
Nov 2028	100.00	0.00	100.00

Yes its new Labour, new Lloyd's

Nearly 12 years ago Michael Howard, then the bright new Conservative Minister, put forward Conservative plans to clear up City scandals. They became the 1986 Financial Services Act. The Times welcomed them, with a few caveats. Time has generally proved both the Act and the caveats right, though more reform is now due.

The biggest caveat for *The Times* and some others was over Clause 40 of the Bill, which excluded Lloyd's, London's 100-year-old insurance market. Many reasons were given. A relatively new regime of self-regulation had been introduced by the Lloyd's Act, meant to stamp out the fraud and insider trading of the 1970s. Lloyd's big overseas earnings were mentioned, along with the correct distinction that Lloyd's underwriting names were sold to traders rather than investors.

Lloyd's was, perhaps, really excluded because its members considered themselves a cut above the general run of savers to be

protected by the Act. They did not want state-sponsored regulators poking their noses into Lloyd's private and usually lucrative world. Nor did the insurance market's professionals.

In the quest for exemption, they had influential allies, notably about four dozen MPs. Some saw Lloyd's as a place to make effortless high returns to supplement their pay. Others were barterists seeking, among other things, to defer penal tax bills. Among them was Mr Howard himself, who had stamped out the fraud and insider trading when he became a minister. Another was Ian Lang, later President of the Board of Trade but once a Lloyd's professional.

Most then thought that Lloyd's was over the worst. Agents were no longer fleeing justice to the comfort of their offshore bank accounts. But far worse was to come. History will never tell whether the

malpractices that multiplied losses incurred by thousands of names in the 1990s would have been prevented if Lloyd's had been regulated under the FSA. The example of mass mis-selling of personal pensions does not suggest that many family fortunes would have been saved. But those affected might have had more faith in the timely and just treatment of their grievances and of those most responsible for them.

Tomorrow, the top brass at Lloyd's will therefore take a big psychological step when, barring last-minute hitches, they recommend that both names and the new corporate investors, brought in to rebuild the market's capacity, should come under the gaze of the SIB. They want to retain internal regulation, but to beef this up and make it responsible to SIB like other second-tier regulators. This looks a better formula than that

adopted by the Stock Exchange, which lost most of its authority to other bodies. It would be an unkind irony if Labour abandoned two-tier regulation just as Lloyd's finally asked to join.

Sadly, there are now only 12,000 names to protect, little more than a third of those trading when the Financial Services Act came into force. If the Lloyd's council agrees

other reforms to modernise the market, there will surely soon be 10,000 or fewer. Already, corporate underwriting names, introduced by the reforms recommended by Sir David Rowland just before he became chairman, account for 44 per cent of Lloyd's capacity. That may soon be more than half. Jonathan Agnew, who heads a committee drawing up the next set of reforms, is a former banker who heads a big corporate name. Commercial Union has bought into an underwriting group.

Perhaps it is no accident that Lloyd's is now anxious to achieve a good rating among international agencies such as Standard & Poor's who decide which insurer is best able to meet claims. The near collapse in 1991-95 questioned the security of policies at Lloyd's. The difficulty of collecting excess losses from recalcitrant names questioned the ultimate

value of its names' unlimited liability to pay.

Tomorrow is also the last day for responses to proposals that move from Lloyd's traditional mystery to proving its asset backing openly. They would raise the minimum wealth for a name from £250,000 to £350,000 by 1999. They would also force individual names to deposit more of their capital with Lloyd's, in effect slashing the amount of insurance they can write per pound of free wealth. They could still underwrite more per pound than the limited liability vehicles, but not much.

More proposals in the pipeline would abolish the annual underwriting account, which allows names to move money in or out. Permanent syndicates carry more favour with potential customers.

No wonder many names who have paid up and hung on for better days feel betrayed. Any

increase in minimum wealth for existing members should be phased in over a decade rather than two years. The council should also ensure that lower gearing does not force names to sell capacity at the same time. The interests of remaining names should at least be equal to the long-term future of Lloyd's.

The survival of Lloyd's was, however, something of a conjuring trick. The old Lloyd's died in the process, leaving a skeleton to be fleshed out to form a new trader to compete in a global market. This will lose the cost advantage of unlimited liability and rely on marketing, City finance and the concentration of expertise among surviving underwriters and brokers. Like the Stock Exchange, it will be in London rather than of London, dominated by large international interests.

New Lloyd's has even back-balled Mr Lang from replacing Sir David at the end of the year merely because he was a politician. Not cricket, but it was broke, so they had to fix it.

Washington split on merits of North America's trade pact

Nafta has revived old debates in the US, reports Bronwen Maddox

Hobbling on crutches, President Clinton may well have felt that the pursuit of free trade was proving unexpectedly sweaty work.

Mr Clinton, in a speech in the bougainvillea-draped garden of Ernesto Zedillo, the Mexican President, was preaching to the converted. Mexico strongly supports Mr Clinton's call for extension of the North American Free Trade Agreement (Nafta) between the US, Canada and Mexico to other countries on the American continent. However, Mr Clinton's crutches are an apt symbol of the way his hopes are running ahead of the growing political constraints.

In the US, the question of whether Nafta has helped the US economy or cost it manufacturing jobs has provoked some of the fiercest battles between the White House and Congress this decade. Henry Kissinger, the former Secretary of State, has said that, if the US fails to extend Nafta, it will be left out of a new pan-American era. However, Nafta has also provoked a new protectionism within the US, splitting the Republican and Democratic parties. Ross Perot, in his 1996 bid for the White House, spoke of the "sucking sound" of investment pouring south of the border.

Outside the US, particularly in Europe, the Nafta experiment is also watched closely. Partly, the political dispute is a barometer of the US's protectionist instincts. Even more important, given the popularity of regional trade blocs, in Asia as well as Europe, Nafta provides one of the best ways of judging whether members really benefit.

Mr Clinton has repeatedly described the passage of Nafta in 1994 as one of the triumphs of his first term. It was intended not just to deepen economic relations with the US's neigh-



President Clinton and President Zedillo of Mexico want to extend their countries' Nafta trade deal to other nations

bours, but, in a similar spirit to the EU, to cement political relations too. In lowering trade barriers with Canada, the pact was ambitious but not fundamentally contentious; in including Mexico's developing economy, it provoked the most bitter trade debate within the US Government for 60 years.

In three years, that controversy has grown louder. Appalled Administration officials, watching the revival of a row they had thought settled, understandably blame the Mexican peso crisis.

Just ten days after the December 1994 Summit of the Americas, in Miami, in which Mr Clinton threw his weight behind calls for a pan-American trading bloc, the Mexican peso collapsed. The US rushed to pull together a \$50 billion international rescue package, itself extending a \$12.5 billion emergency loan. Although the Mexican economy has rebounded and the US was repaid in full in January, the crisis gave unexpected support to Nafta's critics. However, two years later, stripping away the effects of the peso collapse, there are still signs that Nafta has worked as expected, although not quite

for the reasons that the Clinton Administration claims.

The Administration laid a trap for itself from the start by claiming that Nafta would increase the US's export surplus with Mexico. Equating exports with employment, it also claimed that Nafta would boost jobs. The Department of Commerce reckoned that each extra \$1 billion of exports would create 20,000 jobs. So, when US merchandise exports to Mexico rose by \$9 billion in 1994, the Administration

published by the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think-tank. As he eloquently points out, the Bush and Clinton Administrations were lured into making spurious economic claims about benefits of Nafta to push the agreement through Congress. He argues, as do many independent economists, that the debate has taken a misleading tack in focusing on the trade balance. There is, for a start, no automatic relationship be-

between a rising value of exports and the number of jobs created; the link between imports and jobs lost is even more questionable. Nor should it be assumed that running a trade surplus each year is always desirable, as nationalists such as Mr Perot seem to do.

Contrary to the impression given by the political heat, Nafta is also small beer. Its effects are dwarfed by the wider economic conditions. The US ran a trade deficit with

how much of this growth can be attributed directly to the agreement; after all, the figures continue a trend that was in place for two decades before Nafta. However, supporters point out that the steepness of the growth in trade after 1994 is startling.

They add that there is growing evidence that companies, particularly in the car industry, are specialising to extract the most value from trade across the border. That is, companies are beginning to regard neighbouring countries as an extension of their own, in just the way the pact promoters envisaged.

There is also at least one point on which Nafta can be given entire credit for making Mexico's response to the 1995 crisis less damaging than it might otherwise have been. The agreement, in effect, forced Mexico to choose devaluation of the peso over exchange controls or import restrictions, alternatives that would arguably have been much more damaging. In 1982, for example, Mexico raised import duties, causing trade to plummet and prolonging its recovery from recession.

Of all the experiments that a country can perform on itself, signing a far-reaching trade pact is one of the most ambitious. As Nafta shows, the immediate costs, in terms of local jobs lost, can be politically explosive. In the short run, the pact may have given ammunition to US protectionists; the Administration's hopes of extending Nafta this summer seem likely to be frustrated, and the issue is set to dominate the race for the White House in 2000.

However, three years on, Nafta is beginning to demonstrate, as Mr Clinton hoped, that it can help all members, although conclusive evidence is likely to surface only after he leaves office.

Whether it also succeeds in deepening political relations between the US and Mexico depends partly on whether the Mexican Government acts vigorously against corruption, as Mr Clinton also pointed out in Mr Zedillo's garden. As EU member countries know, an economic device cannot easily carry the full burden of political integration.

Nafta has, however, at least provided encouragement, in spite of all the controversy, for the view that regional trade pacts are worth building.

Supermarket chains make gains from smaller rivals

Sarah Cunningham finds that Safeway has turned conventional wisdom about Britain's leading food retailers on its head

Safeway, the quietest and least flashy of the leading supermarket groups, has got into the habit recently of hitting the market with surprises. Figures released by its February profit warning. After a good Christmas, sales in January took an entirely unexpected dive. Equally quickly, they recovered. While the whole sector was hit by its warning, Safeway shares suffered most.

It was a case, as David Webster, the chairman, puts it, of "shooting the messenger".

Verdict also gave the market a shake when in January it gave warning of the high risk of an all-out price war. Mr Perks said that Sainsbury's, which has suffered the indignity of being toppled from first

place among the supermarkets by Tesco, seemed at the time to be the company most likely to start such a war. The threat has now receded, he acknowledges. "If Sainsbury's were going to do it, it would probably have done it by now."

He has doubts about Sainsbury's recovery, however, and is not alone. David McCarthy, at BZW, one of the most consistently bearish about Sainsbury's, is sceptical about the company's underlying sales performance.

He points out that while Sainsbury's reported 4.2 per cent like-for-like sales growth last week, it also said it was experiencing 1.5 per cent inflation. As other supermarkets are reporting deflation, this can only mean that Sainsbury's has been raising its prices.

The competition between the four chains is and will remain intense. But the nervousness about food retailers that has been in the market since this year's profit warnings has now largely evaporated. The world is a safe place for supermarkets again — as long as they are called Safeway, Sainsbury's, Tesco or Asda.

There is an awful lot of weak competition out there

Extending Nafta is set to dominate the White House race in 2000

claimed that Nafta had created 180,000 jobs.

That claim came back to haunt the Administration. When US merchandise exports to Mexico dropped by \$5 billion in 1995, in the wake of the peso collapse, opponents of Nafta promptly claimed that 100,000 jobs had been lost.

These claims and counter-claims are "95 per cent rubbish", according to a study by Sidney Weintraub, a former State Department diplomat,

tween a rising value of exports and the number of jobs created; the link between imports and jobs lost is even more questionable. Nor should it be assumed that running a trade surplus each year is always desirable, as nationalists such as Mr Perot seem to do.

Contrary to the impression given by the political heat, Nafta is also small beer. Its effects are dwarfed by the wider economic conditions. The US ran a trade deficit with

Bottled out

ONE casualty of the GrandMet/ Guinness merger is a delightful sounding trip to Prague for 50 brokers and fund managers and a few journalists. They were to learn about how Guinness was selling Johnnie Walker and its like to the newly liberated east Europe. Lots of visits, chances to sample the stuff — you know the kind of thing, and a strong emphasis on United Distillers, the spirits arm. Except that it's been cancelled. Guinness says the lawyers nixed it, because every dot

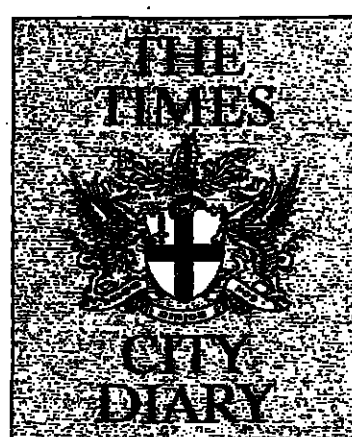
and comma would have had to be cleared by them.

Nothing to do with the fact that one party who has not come out so well from the deal is Fint Johnson, managing director of United Distillers but definitely number two, under GrandMet's Jack Keenan, in the merged spirits side, renamed United Distillers & Vintners. No doubt Mr Johnson would have his own views to put to City folk — except that they will not now be hearing them.

ER. THERE seems to be some sort of mistake here. Winner of the RISK magazine poll as top provider of highly technical derivative instruments to companies is Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, where Charkin Man Peter Young had his own wacky way with exotic investments. Second place in a poll of more than 500 finance directors and treasurers went to, you guessed, NatWest Markets, fresh from its own £90 million losses trading interest derivatives.

Shut out

HIGH drama at Investors Chronicle, hitherto such a dull publication. Long-serving journalist Conor Joyce was held up in the office of the edi-



tor, Ceri "Pol Pot" Jones, yesterday morning in protest at what he considered to be his brutal regime. Joyce, whom I dimly recall as a somewhat over-excitable member of the press pack, had to be winked out by police from nearby Holborn Police Station. "He's gone," said Jones. "It's something that's been going on for a long time."

How long had he been there? "I can't remember." I press on, by now seriously worried — how many days had the poor man been barricaded in? When had he last eaten? But she was referring to his length of service. The protest lasted a couple of hours, it seems. Joyce had already resigned, so what was it about? "Many things, I dare say, some of them of a very

personal nature. I know you're busy scribbling. I really can't help you further." Holborn police said no one of that name had been arrested or charged, so it seems the matter ended with a fatherly chat. Here at *The Times* we keep a pair of water cannon handy for such eventualities.

FROM tonight we will all be irritated by the latest advertising campaign from BT. The star, replacing Bob Hoskins and others, is a nine-year-old schoolgirl called Nicola Bland, who will ask, wide-eyed, why adults have to work so hard and why Daddy can't make it home for bath-time. All terribly guilt-inducing, but what of the doubtless idyllic home life of young Nicola? Her father, BT's mouthpiece will only say, does a "blue-collar, nine-to-five job". What is it, and when does he get home? Says the mouthpiece, in an unexpected moment of candour, "I think that's the question the ad agency are trying to avoid."

Tactful silence

SIR Colin Marshall will be hoping that Gordon Brown will not have too sharp a memory when, as President of the Confederation of British Industry, he introduces the Chancellor at next week's CBI dinner. Though the British Airways chairman, to the surprise of some insiders, successfully sustained the CBI's policy of political neutrality

during the election, Centre Point officials recall that the head of one of the Tories' favourite companies took some of them by surprise by telling last year's dinner guest, John Major, that he hoped to see him back again at the dinner in two years' time.

By convention, Prime Ministers grace the CBI's annual Mayfair dinner once every two years, but the significance of Sir Colin's remarks was that come what may, an election would have to take place in the interim. So they were perhaps a little more enthusiastic than Sir Colin might care to remember as he next week glad-hands Labour's Chancellor.

MARTIN WALLER



Sir Colin Marshall has to greet Gordon Brown at the CBI dinner

NOTICE OF VARIATION OF INTEREST RATES

With effect from 15 May 1997

our variable Mortgage rate will increase from 6.31% (6.5% APR) to 6.69% (6.9% APR) per annum for new borrowers and from 1 June 1997 for existing borrowers.



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Imperial ready to fight ban on advertising

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

IMPERIAL Tobacco Group said yesterday that it would like to see any further cigarette advertising restrictions kept voluntary.

The Government announced in the Queen's Speech that it is to start work immediately on a White Paper looking at measures to reduce tobacco consumption. It is aiming to pass legislation, including a ban on tobacco advertising, during the current session of Parliament.

But Gareth Davis, chief executive, said that existing voluntary restrictions had worked well in reducing the number of smokers in the UK. He added that Imperial would argue for the right to be

allowed to communicate with its customers, but was willing to talk to the Government over the content of its proposed White Paper.

Mr Davis's comments came as Imperial, which produces brands such as Regal, Embassy and John Player Special, announced its first set of interim results since demerging from Hanson last autumn. Half-year operating profits increased 5 per cent to £183 million in line with City expectations, while turnover rose 4 per cent to £1.94 billion.

Operating profits in the UK rose 3.5 per cent to £147 million. Imperial said that the rate of decline in the cigarette market had accelerated to 3 per cent because of duty rises which had taken the price of premium brand cigarettes above the psychologically important £3 per packet. But Imperial raised its market share to 38.4 per cent from 37.9 per cent because of a shift to cheaper brands including Lambert & Butler.

Profits from international businesses were up 13 per cent to £36 million. Imperial said Rizla, the cigarette paper company that was purchased for £185 million in January, was performing well. The company aims to make further cost savings by integrating the sales teams of the two companies with around 50 job losses.

Imperial's one blackspot was France, where sales fell 4 per cent after the cut-price launch of the Winfield brand by rival Rothmans.

Mr Davis added that the company was confident it would see off the 14 legal actions pending in this country. He said that legal aid has been refused in all the cases and Imperial currently has made no provision for losses. A maiden interim dividend of 7.2p is payable on July 1. The shares closed up 2p at 403.2p.

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Bradford & Bingley lifts rates

By ANNE ASHWORTH

THE struggle between building societies converting into banks and those staying mutuals resumed yesterday when the Bradford & Bingley Building Society set its increased variable mortgage rate at 7.35 per cent, 0.25 per cent below the Halifax's rate.

The B&B, a committed mutual, has also lifted its savings rates, the first society to declare its hand in the summer savings war. Savings rates will rise by between 0.20 and 0.80 per cent from May 18. The Halifax has yet to announce its savers' rates to apply from June.

The rises in loan and savers' rates were triggered by last week's 0.25 per cent base rate rise.

Borrowers who have been with the B&B more than two years will pay a special 7.15 per cent rate.



Reflecting on success: David Goldman, left, chairman of Sage, and Paul Walker, chief executive, reported a 20 per cent rise in profit to £19.3 million (£16.1 million) in the six months to March 31. The soaring pound shaved £1.1 million from the figures. Sage said more than 60 per cent of its business is now generated from its existing client base. Earnings were 12p (9.92p) a share; an interim dividend of 0.97p (0.88p) is due on June 23.

Bid favourite Westpac 13% ahead

FROM RACHEL BRIDGE IN SYDNEY

WESTPAC, one of Australia's big four banks, achieved a better than expected 13 per cent rise in operating profits, to \$638 million (£319 million), in its half year to March 31.

However, the bank, which is seen as one of Australia's prime targets for a takeover by

a UK or other non-Australian bank, said that pressure on margins may prevent it from doing as well in its second half. Robert Joss, managing director, said: "There's constant pressure on margins so there's a test to do the best we can on fees, on lowering costs and increasing efficiencies."

Mr Joss raised the possibility of Westpac holding a \$500

million preference share issue as part of its \$51.4 billion takeover of Bank of Melbourne, a regional bank, saying that it would be insurance to keep its balance sheet strong if a lot of Bank of Melbourne shareholders chose the cash option instead of Westpac shares.

Transaction fees and income from account-keeping rose to \$379 million, from \$306 mil-

lion in the same period last year, helping to lift overall non-interest income to \$369 million (\$174 million).

Analysts differ as to whether Westpac's agreed bid for Bank of Melbourne lessens or increases its appeal as a takeover target for an overseas bank. Some say it will be too big to swallow. Others say the deal improves its business spread.

Optimistic outlook at Bank of Ireland

By ADAM JONES

BANK of Ireland, the buyer of Bristol & West Building Society, reported a rise in 1996 pre-tax profits to £1.396 million from £1.316 million in the previous year. Pat Molloy, chief executive, said the outlook for further volume growth this year was good, despite continuing pressure on margins.

The performance was lifted by the end to restructuring in the bank's US operations, which held back the 1995 pre-tax profit figure with a £148.1 million exceptional charge.

Mr Molloy said: "The outlook and conditions in all the markets in which we are operating are good. It's a good time in the banking business." He said the £1.66 billion Bristol & West deal had dented the bank's purchasing power, "a little", but it was still surveying growth opportunities.

The bank's London-listed share price has soared past 700p from about 130p under Mr Molloy's stewardship. It said profits at its retail division grew from £1.183 million to £1.204 million. Assets grew 6.8 per cent to £1.917 million.

Corporate and treasury profits were down slightly, from £1.75 million to £1.529 million, despite buoyant foreign exchange trading. Increased revenues from Lifetime Assurance, Davy stockbrokers and the bank's asset management arm, which now looks after £113.6 billion, helped to boost non-interest income by £134.6 million to £135.2 million.

Costs increased 4.4 per cent in the year, helping to push operating expenses up to £1.543 million (£1.520 million).

The vesting date of Bristol & West is expected to be July 28. A dividend of £1.65p is proposed, making a total of £1.75p (£1.525p) for the year.

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Prosecutors arrest Nomura executives

TOKYO prosecutors arrested three officials of Nomura, Japan's biggest securities brokerage, yesterday on suspicion that they illegally compensated a favoured client for trading losses. A criminal complaint, filed against them and Nomura on Tuesday by Japan's Securities and Exchange Surveillance Commission, alleges that, with Nomura's approval, the three illegally compensated Kojin Building, a property company operated by relatives of an accused extortionist, in 1995. It says the payments, by executives Shimppei Matsuki, Nobutaka Fujikura and Osamu Fujita, protected the client from ¥49.7 million (about £245,000) in trading losses.

Matsuki, Fujikura and Hideo Sakamaki, former Nomura President, are also named in a ¥70 million class-action lawsuit filed on behalf of shareholders. The suit says they funneled shareholders' money into a secret account from which stock trades were made on Kojin Building's behalf.

Pemberstone purchase

PEMBERSTONE, the residential property investment company, has agreed to acquire a portfolio of tenanted residential dwellings from Woolwich Assured Homes, a subsidiary of Woolwich Building Society, for about £12 million. The properties are located mainly in the South East of England. Separately, Pemberstone announced its formal offer for the shares it does not already own in South Eastern Recovery Assured Homes, valuing them at £4.83 million.

Scottish Radio record

SCOTTISH RADIO reported record earnings as the group's new radio stations and newspapers achieved strong growth. Pre-tax profits in the half year to March 31 rose 39 per cent to £4.5 million on turnover up 37 per cent to £18.3 million. The interim dividend, to be paid on July 4, rises from 2.5p to 3p. The company said it intends to make more acquisitions. Business Jay of Paddington, a Scottish Radio director, has resigned after her appointment as Health Minister.

Sanderson advances

SANDERSON ELECTRONICS, the computer services company, reported pre-tax profits of £3.5 million (£3.3 million) for the half year to March 31. It said trading had started positively in the second half. Turnover was £33.4 million (£30.6 million). Earnings were 5.9p a share (5.3p). The company, which sponsors both Southampton and Sheffield Wednesday football clubs, is paying a second interim dividend of 2.4p a share (2.1p). A first interim of 2.2p a share was paid on February 3.

LucasVarity signs deal

LUCASVARITY, the Anglo-American engineering group, has signed a joint venture deal with Tianjin Engine Works in China. Initial investment in the joint venture, to be called Perkins Engines (Tianjin), will be £18 million. The venture will manufacture more than 50,000 engines a year in Tianjin, China's third-largest city, by 2001 and expand to 120,000 engines a year. LucasVarity said it expected the demand for diesel engines to double in China by the end of the decade.

BP builds in Scotland

BP, the oil company, is investing £35 million in a Scottish venture that will create up to 120 construction jobs. Work will start immediately on two new furnaces designed to increase the capacity for handling ethylene gas - used as a building block for plastics - from 50,000 to 320,000 tonnes annually at BP's Grangemouth site. The project is set to last 17 months. Investment is also planned for downstream units, including a polyethylene plant for plastics manufacture.

Audit committee can be boon

Those ensuring that the rules are obeyed could do so much more for their company, says Martyn Jones

Are audit committees yet another burden on business or can they make a positive contribution beyond simply ensuring compliance with the rules? This is a question that, for many, remains to be answered.

Over the past decade, we have seen the arrival of audit committees in larger UK companies and other organisations. Although audit committees were already part of corporate life, their introduction was accelerated by the Cadbury Committee recommendations. Compliance with those recommendations is now very high. What, however, should such committees do?

It is clear that commentators on the Harried Committee's remit believe that any corporate governance framework should be such that it allows business to succeed without successful companies there would be nothing to govern. Because the audit committee is a cornerstone of the UK corporate governance system, a working party of the audit faculty of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales was set up with a view to providing helpful guidance. The result of its work is a booklet *Audit Committees - a Framework*

for Assessment, which was published last week.

The working party has not tried to set out lists of rules for audit committees to follow; such a prescriptive approach would tend to encourage a "box-ticking" mentality leading to corporate governance in form, rather than in substance. Instead, a framework is provided for self-assessment of the committee's operation, accompanied by a picking list of good practice. As Yve Newbold says in a foreword to the booklet, some readers will find at least one item in the picking list that is new to them and some will find it sobering to see how far their committee's practices fall short of the ideal.

Because of the way that the working party approached its task, the framework is as relevant to smaller companies, not-for-profit organisations and the public sector as it is to our largest companies. However, the working party recognises that there is no single blueprint for success.

An underlying tenet of the booklet is that an audit committee is a committee of the main board and that it is the main board that is responsible for the direction and, ultimately, the management of the company. Recognition is given to the increasing trend in many large



Martyn Jones says audit committees need not be a burden

er companies for the board to delegate to the audit committee some oversight role in relation to internal financial control.

The booklet also recognises that the main board may increasingly use the audit committee's appreciation of business risk to assist its consideration of the wider aspects of internal control, including operational efficiency and effectiveness and compliance

with the law. This may take audit committee work beyond what have traditionally been considered financial areas.

The booklet suggests that, whatever the committee's role in the company, it should ask itself certain questions about its structure. These cover the appropriateness of its terms of reference, the selection and training of members, the frequency of meetings, the relevance of information available

to it, the adequacy of administrative support and the effectiveness of relationships with internal audit, external audit and executive management.

Having given guidance on setting up an audit committee that can make a positive contribution to a business, the booklet suggests questions to assist the committee in actually making such a contribution. These questions relate to business risk, internal control, fraud, financial statements and other documents (for example, profit forecasts), regulation and ethical matters.

Finally, the booklet suggests that an audit committee continually asks itself how it can improve its effectiveness as part of the system of checks and balances in the company's control environment.

This booklet is of relevance to all directors, not only members of audit committees. It will not, of itself, give rise to an audit committee that provides a positive contribution to a business, but it does distil much experience and make it available to those who wish to benefit. Not all companies will be at the leading edge; indeed many will choose to follow a broad consensus of plc companies. Other companies will recognise practical ideas that they can adopt or adapt.

So is an audit committee a burden or a benefit? It is up to the directors. With this booklet, it could be a real benefit.

□ Martyn Jones, of Deloitte & Touche, chairs the ICAEW audit faculty working party

Hail to the referees of privatisation

If you were to ask one of the prominent accountants of our time what the major economic breakthrough of the past half century has been, he would suggest privatisation. Indeed, he says as much in his introduction to research published today that provides the clearest view yet of the whole privatised utility market. Sir Bryan Carsberg, who has been head of Ofwat, the telecommunications watchdog, and of the Office of Fair Trading, then goes on to argue that accounting lies at its heart. However, it is accounting that has been sadly misunderstood in all the battles that privatised utilities and their regulation have provoked.

The research, by Professor Irvine Lapsley and Kenneth Kilpatrick, of Edinburgh University, is called *A Question of Trust: regulators and the regulatory regime for privatised utilities*, and has been funded and published by the Scots ICA, which deserves much praise for encouraging such useful and timely work.

Looking back at the old days of water boards and other utilities, it is amazing that they were allowed to be so unmonitored and unproductive. The golden age of public service, worthy though the aims were, is here recalled as stagnation and waste. Successive governments were to blame. The problem with governments is that they want the laudus of running a thing but wish to avoid responsibility if anything goes wrong. Running nationalised industries was a fine example. As the research shows, ministers made fools of themselves by wanting both to be regulators of each industry and chairmen. They should have been neither. The potential for tension between the minister, in his interpretation of general policy for a specific industry, and the responsibility of the state corporation's board for day-to-day management is evident," the research study says. It quotes a telling point from a Commons committee for nationalised industries report in 1968. "The ministry officials," it said, "are now attempting to examine projects in almost as much detail, and with much the same material before them and with the same questions in mind, as the industrial managers themselves." No wonder the system cracked to a halt.

And small wonder that when the industries were gradually freed from this yoke they were rather startled by independent regulators. It was, as the research study says, "a situation

fuelled by tensions by, on the one part regulators who are surprised at the nature of regulation, and, on the other, a set of regulators who are set to oversee the activities of regulated with certainty and conviction".

The bureaucracy was wounded and angry. The study quotes Jim McKinnon, the first gas regulator, on an encounter between himself and the British Gas board under Sir Denis Rooke. "Denis sat at the end of a long table," McKinnon said. "I sat to his right, facing four or five of his managers. I made my requests for detailed financial data... His managers all started jumping up and down in full macho fashion, tearing into me and my views. They thought this would impress Rooke. But he leaned across to them, they stopped and very quietly he said to them: 'Who are the public going to believe in five years' time - him or you?' And he told them to get on with providing me with the financial data I wanted."

The study follows utilities' progress since those days and concludes that huge benefits have come from the change, though it is careful to point out that issues of executive pay are beyond the regulators' brief.

The real problem that the study pinpoints is the growing difference between the type of information on which such industries should be judged and the information on which the world tends to judge them. Regulators insist on striving towards real economic cost as a measurement. The rest of the world grabs whichever measurement suits its line of argument.

It is the old dispute between current cost accounting and historical cost. Current cost figures, which take into account adjustments for inflation and erosion of value, are the best way to assess long-term performance. However, companies almost always prefer to trumpet short-term gains, and the rest of the world loves to bash a political Aunt Sally. Historical cost figures give you a better chance of both of those. As the study says, "there is the important distinction between regulators focusing on financial results on a current cost basis as a better measure of the long-term financial performance of these utilities, and the capital markets, the media and other interested parties responding to their financial results on an historical cost basis".

Small wonder that Sir Bryan writes that he has "often thought that accounting lies at the heart of utility regulation".



ROBERT BRUCE

Tip of the iceberg

THE disclosure last week in the English ICA's annual report and accounts that Andrew Colquhoun, the chief executive, received £124,000 a year may only be the tip of the iceberg as far as the institute's truculent members are concerned. Rumour has it that since the year-end a further hefty rise in salary has been granted. The hiring of a

competent technical director from Arthur Andersen meant paying the fellow more than the chief executive. And that meant an element of leap-frogging had to follow.

Sikka's promise

MEMBERS' hearts sank to the bottom of their boots at the start of the Association of

Chartered Certified Accountants' annual meeting. Professor Prem Sikka, the indefatigable rebel, strode to the microphone at the first available opportunity. He urged the office-holders to behave with dignity and then said that he had a total of 35 questions to ask at the meeting. Thankfully, after skirmishes on the question of the president hav-

ing lunched some council candidates and the travel costs of the chief executive's spouse, he left most of them unasked. But he has promised to set up a web site later in the year so that he can keep his supporters up to date.

Flare for diet

THE leadership at Grant

Thornton is taking the idea of lean business strategies to heart. Several have adopted a French diet system and have lost considerable amounts of weight. David McDonnell, who has recently been re-elected chairman, is finding he can now wear suits that had been hanging unused in his wardrobe for years. Rumour has it that he will be back in flares and wide lapels in a few weeks' time.

ROBERT BRUCE

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Shares on rollercoaster

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

1997	Low	Company	Price	High	Low	Company	Price	High
469	407	Alfred Dunhill	450	7	68	134		
470	330	Budweiser	330	10	32	158		
471	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
472	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
473	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
474	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
475	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
476	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
477	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
478	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
479	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		

BANKS

1997	Low	Company	Price	High	Low	Company	Price	High
480	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
481	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
482	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
483	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
484	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
485	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
486	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
487	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
488	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
489	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		

BREWERIES, PUBS & REST

1997	Low	Company	Price	High	Low	Company	Price	High
490	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
491	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
492	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
493	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
494	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
495	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
496	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
497	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
498	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
499	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		

BUILDING & CONSTRUCT

1997	Low	Company	Price	High	Low	Company	Price	High
500	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
501	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
502	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
503	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
504	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
505	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
506	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
507	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
508	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
509	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		

BUILDING MATERIALS

1997	Low	Company	Price	High	Low	Company	Price	High
510	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
511	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
512	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
513	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
514	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
515	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
516	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
517	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
518	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
519	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		

CHEMICALS

1997	Low	Company	Price	High	Low	Company	Price	High
520	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
521	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
522	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
523	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
524	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
525	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
526	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
527	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
528	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
529	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		

DISTRIBUTORS

1997	Low	Company	Price	High	Low	Company	Price	High
530	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
531	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
532	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
533	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
534	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
535	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
536	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
537	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
538	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
539	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

1997	Low	Company	Price	High	Low	Company	Price	High
540	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
541	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
542	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
543	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
544	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
545	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
546	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
547	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
548	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
549	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		

BANKS

1997	Low	Company	Price	High	Low	Company	Price	High
550	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
551	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
552	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
553	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
554	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
555	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
556	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
557	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
558	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
559	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		

BREWERIES, PUBS & REST

1997	Low	Company	Price	High	Low	Company	Price	High
560	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
561	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
562	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
563	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
564	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
565	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
566	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
567	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
568	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
569	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		

BUILDING & CONSTRUCT

1997	Low	Company	Price	High	Low	Company	Price	High
570	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
571	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
572	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
573	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
574	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
575	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
576	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
577	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
578	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
579	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		

BUILDING MATERIALS

1997	Low	Company	Price	High	Low	Company	Price	High
580	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
581	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
582	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
583	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
584	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
585	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
586	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
587	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
588	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
589	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		

CHEMICALS

1997	Low	Company	Price	High	Low	Company	Price	High
590	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
591	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
592	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
593	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
594	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
595	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
596	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
597	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
598	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
599	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		

DISTRIBUTORS

1997	Low	Company	Price	High	Low	Company	Price	High
600	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
601	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
602	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
603	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
604	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
605	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
606	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
607	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
608	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		
609	370	Guinness	370	10	32	158		

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement price is based on the previous day's close, but price/earnings ratios are based on current earnings.									
97	Price	High	Low	1					

Restitutory remedy might have been possible

tions by limiting the description permitted by section 20(8D) to one which did not extend to what in *Ex*

section, (8D), which was as applicable to notices served by the Revenue on the relevant taxpayer.

Solicitors: Travers Smith
Braithwaite; Solicitor, Inland
Revenue

The plaintiff identified the potential of a stadium, used by the Brighton Squash Rackets Club on land owned by the defendants, as a tennis centre. The plaintiff held discussions with representatives of the defendants.

The plaintiff's restitutionary

SIR CHRISTOPHER SLADE concurring, said that, notwithstanding the *Salomon* principle, he would not have ruled on the jurisdiction to strike out should have been exercised.

9) 7.30
Adventures
1) 8.30
Active (r)

all or any substantial part of the money to fund his costs of the that if the funder were not resident in the European Union an applica-

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ancillary to some other primary jurisdiction. Here it would be ancillary to no power the court had. The defendants could not apply for security for costs against a third party within Order 23 of the

the plaintiff's mother, and *Murphy v Young and Co's Brewery plc* (The Times January 8, 1997; [1997] 1 All ER 518), a company paying under a legal expenses insurance policy with limited cover.



Telephone: 01708 351 377. Fax: 01708 371 275.

by reference simply to the question whether there was any material before him on which he could exercise that discretion, and in relying on *Savill v Southend Health Authority* (1995) 1 WLR

notice of appeal and on that basis refuse to extend time.
Lord Justice Brooke agreed.
Solicitor: Connell Smith,
Worcester; Everatt & Co, Eve-

10am from Manchester, Liverpool
Wolverhampton or intermediate

London Euston. No travel time
to Birmingham New Street,
connections to London Euston.

CHA



NGING TRAD

CHANGING TIMES

THEATRE

The ravishing visual effects of Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* light up the West End

RADIO

A class by himself: why Jimmy Young fronts the best presenter-led programme around

THE TIMES ARTS

VISUAL ART

Old Master: work by Frans Hals is one of the highlights of the Fine Art Fair in New York

TOMORROW

Meet America's Alison Krauss, the woman who is bringing fiddle and banjo into the mainstream

THEATRE: Spectacular effects enhance London's newest musical; plus an Irish mythic soap opera

Dazzled by a feast of a beast

Since the Disney Organisation's entertainment what the world is to modern Britain, the chances of its *Beauty and the Beast* falling are about as slim as the Pentagon being visited by Lapland or Christmas being a fairy-tale is smoother than a road properly beamed and music is a sort of one-millionth of the \$10 million-plus cost has been spent on special effects to ensure that the brain-cells begin to come away your ear-drums to fudge the eyes will remain ravished.

So certain is the film's conquest of the Dominions, however, that it seems vain to claim that the

Beauty and the Beast

scenic ado tends to the nonsense of the story. You understand why Julie-Anne's Belle, who loves nothing but than to read Arthurian romances, feels an outsider amid the pig hills and twee gables of the Ruritman homestead. Most of us would weary of a village where the fishmongers, pie-sellers, milkmaids and lady spinners mill about taking visible life in being "little people, waking up to say bonjour". But why do she even momentarily fret at being in a castle whose inmates wonderfully mix Chatterbox, the Paris Opera, and Norma Desmond's Sunset Boulevard hideaway?

Moreover, she has to feel a little uneasy or hungry as a butler dressed as a chandler and a housekeeper half-transformed into a teapot to bribe on a somersaulting cushioned dancing corkscrew, a swaying-astrainer and other such improbable comforts. Soon the fun is escalated into a huge production number, with spoons, knives and plates whirling about in a circle of red hearts and purple petals, while champagne bubbles spray glittering dust into the air. The cuteness, glad to say, comes to a halt with a teacup-call Chip who yearns only to become real boy.

Mark you, the cast also contains Alasdair Harvey's Beast, a hirsute, horned blend of Godzilla, Pan and Mr Rochester who roars a bit noisily and leaps rather rudely round the rocco furniture. But it takes only a little blabbing by Beauty to transform him into a mawkish softie with nice table manners and a bashful smile. And so, via some lightning wrestling with the villain on the Gothic battlements, to a relief of the teapot lady's song about as old as time, songs as old as rhyme: Brighten's Belle — the fair, a sweet and charming advertisement for moral improvement and dental floss — gets her cleanup Beast.



Julie-Anne Brighton's Belle — "a charming advertisement for moral improvement and dental floss" — cuddles up to Alasdair Harvey's Beast in the Disney extravaganza

Alan Menken composed the pleasant if unmemorable tunes. Tim Rice and Howard Ashman wrote lyrics that are at their best when Belle's village wooer, in Burke Moses's performance a gloriously narcissistic blend of a lacquered Elvis Presley and a jerked Robin Hood, is telling her how much she loves him: "All roads lead to the best things in life are, all's well that ends with ME." But otherwise the show is mainly to be recommended for Stanley Meyer's witchy woods and grand but shadowy stairways, and for the moment when Harvey rises into the air, a beast, spins like a flying saucer on the blink, and lands a prince. However, banal the story-telling, that climax is magic.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

This review appeared in late editions of The Times yesterday

Flat start for council tenants

POET Paula Meehan's tale of desperate days in the life of a group of council flat-dwelling Dubliners makes a stark contrast to the middle-class angst of *Haloween Night*, Rough Magic's previous production. Setting aside the worries of film-makers, graphic designers and failed writers, the company instead deals here with the realities of crime, drug addiction and a man who thinks he is a bird.

Despite clear provocation when her husband (Mick Nolan) starts cooing like a pigeon, Mrs Sweeney (Ger Ryan), whose daughter has recently died from Aids, refuses to see another one of

her charges institutionalised. Instead she attempts not simply to put up with him, but somehow to integrate his pigeon-walking insanity into the life of Maria Gorretti Mansions, to let his loyal friend, Oweny (Anto Nolan), take him down the local, and even encourage her friends to incorporate him into their carnivalesque Halloween celebrations.

Like Paul Mercier's play of Nineties working-class Dublin, *Buddhead*, Mrs Sweeney opens with a burglary. Two young boys tear through the dilapidated flat, grabbing whatever small pieces might be of worth and casting the rest to the floor. The pair have

Mrs Sweeney

Project at the Mint, Dublin

such little respect that they almost knock over the play's eponymous hero as she is making her entrance.

Kathy McArdle's production is similarly brusque, never really giving itself enough time to work out what in Meehan's script is worth having and what should be left where it is. Instead, it seems to stuff everything into a bursting swagbag and make a break for

the nearest window. At one time or other, almost all the cast looked as though they feared being arrested for this imaginary crime.

Meehan's text is a rich, sophisticated amalgam of soap opera and Irish myth, full of sophisticated allusions to everything from *On The Waterfront* to *Junio and the Paycock*. No amount of subtle writing will compensate when cast and director have not come to grips with the material's potential. Meehan could develop into an intriguing playwright. But for now her play has been too harshly punished by a shaky production.

LUKE CLANCY

Success is forever Young

The gong given to Jimmy Young this week in the annual Sony Awards will be seen in some quarters as a sentimental gesture towards the doyen of broadcasting, in much the same way that Hollywood's equivalents, the Oscar, gives lifetime achievement awards to people the film industry fears may die in action without having received a medal.

This perception is quite wrong, but it exists because Young is a broadcaster in a class of his own. Young is often described as a British institution, though most of the people who thus describe him can reasonably be suspected of not quite knowing what he does, or where he does it.

RADIO

What Young does is to front the best presenter-led programme in radio and where he does it is on Radio 2, every weekday morning for two hours. The format is a mix of music and interviews. On various days there are consumer slots on health, travel, food and the law.

The programme has been running since 1972 but it started on Radio 1 six years earlier, by which time Young was already in middle age: he had first broadcast in 1949. His age, now, is officially 72 but the year of his birth is a secret kept from *Who's Who*.

Although it might reasonably be supposed that Young's success is assisted by a light Gloucestershire brogue and an ability to chortle with the best of them, his core secret is that he seems to have turned the trick of talking directly to, and for, the individual listener.

He combines this under-rated ability with a hard edge. Young has interviewed every Prime Minister since, and including, Harold Wilson. During the recent election campaign, his interview with Tony Blair abandoned the obtuse cleverness that most political journalists tend to go for. Instead it cut to the chase, Young's first question had the blunt common touch that characterises his technique: "If the Tories have been such a disaster, why are you adopting so many of their policies?"

The line was pursued with a relentlessness that clearly discomfited Mr Blair, and I know of three political writers who regarded the interview as one of the best of the campaign. It demonstrated that Young does not survive on experience alone: he is thoroughly researched, a habit not found everywhere on the airwaves.

Young is undoubtedly the best argument against ageism in radio and it is fervently to be hoped that in attempting to lower the age profile of the Radio 2 audience, James Moir, the Controller, leaves the 11.30am slot alone. Young has 1.5 million listeners a day, which is not a bad life insurance policy.

PETER BARNARD

Selling for fistfuls of dollars

VISUAL ART: John Russell
Taylor surveys New York's annual two attractions in May

For most of the year it is the art capital of the world. But there can be little doubt for the first two weeks of May: New York is the up-and-coming art capital of the world. It is because of the happy coincidence of the International Fine Art Fair and the International Impressionist and Post-Impressionist Fair, which generally open at the same time, that the city is the world's art capital for the first two weeks of May.

The Fine Art Fair is a relatively recent institution: this year's is only the fourth. But in that short time it has established itself as, thoughby no means the biggest, it is away the most select and loftily priced, with work on offer at more than a million dollars (or even more) on most stands. Interestingly, while virtually every comparable fair seems to aim at a wide extension, New York's is more and more selective. This year there are only 63 artists showing, as against 1,500 last

year. Admittedly this is largely to accommodate a first-class restaurant, on the principle that visitors might like to spend an uninterrupted day at the fair without having to venture outside in search of sustenance.

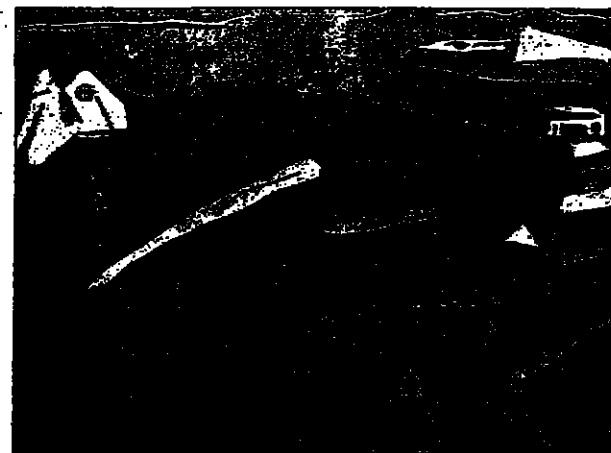
This year the cut-off date for exhibits has been extended to 1940, which allows in for the first time such modern masterpieces as Miro's *Paysage Animé* (Daniel Malingue). But this remains an occasion closely restricted to fine art, which means in effect painting and sculpture, post-Renaissance and part of the Western cultural tradition. (New York has, of course, its own Asian Art Fair earlier in the year.) Since every international art fair inevitably takes place somewhere specific, it is virtually inevitable that each will show a degree of specialisation in the local product: Dutch art at Measrich, Swiss art at Basel, and so naturally, American art in New York.

It does give the fair a distinctive flavour to encounter such fine American paintings as Paul Cézanne's *After*



John Singer Sargent's 1914 *Portrait of Sylvia Harrison*

a Snow, Avenue du Maine, Paris (1892) at Hirsch and Adler, as fine a piece of luminist painting as you could wish to see; the masterly late Sargent portrait of Sylvia Harrison with the Adelson Galleries; and, perhaps most



Joan Miró's masterful *Paysage Animé* (1935)

strikingly early witness to American Modernism from at least a couple of years before the Armory Show, which officially introduced such dangerous Europeans as Matisse to the American public.

All the same, the main excitement of the fair, as usual, are to be found among the Old Masters and the Impressionists. Though there are some excellent Impressionists, notably Renoirs and Monets, in this area it is mainly the lesser-known figures that attract attention — Henri Lebasque, Louis Valtat and Charles Camoin, not to mention Manet's pupil Eva Gonzales, whose tiny *On the Beach* (Galerie Biers) is perhaps the finest piece of classic Impressionism in sight. However, for the real cream of Impressionism, collectors with several millions to spare had to wait for Christie's May sale of the Loeb Collection, which included world-famous Cézannes, Toulouse-Lautrecs and Manet's definitive *Self-Portrait with Palette*: the Manet went for \$18.7 million, and Cézanne's portrait of his wife

brought the sale's top price of \$23.1 million.

As for the Old Masters, there can be no reservations. From the Masolino *St John the Baptist* with Bob P. Haboldt to Tiepolo's *Martyrdom of San Lorenzo* with Rosenberg and Stibel (New York dealers both), Italian art is superbly represented. The Netherlands do about as well, high points being Noortman's pair of husband-and-wife portraits by Frans Hals, the finest works by this master to come on the market for some years, and Jan Steen's *Dancing Couple on a Terrace*, with Richard Green. Those in search of rarity should be well satisfied with a virtually unique Redouté flower piece in oils, recently rediscovered and offered by John Mitchell, or for that matter Spink-Leger's Gainsborough. *Mr and Mrs Philip Dehane* with their daughter Mary, thought to be the only Gainsborough full-length group still in private hands. When rarity and quality come combined like this, you get a real feeling of what art fairs are for.

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FILM 1

Ewan McGregor may have hit the cinematic big time, but he got his start in an 11-minute short



FILM 2

At the Cannes Film Festival, Ingmar Bergman delves into his parents' past in *Private Confessions*...

THE ARTS



FILM 3

... while Sigourney Weaver heads an excellent cast in Ang Lee's latest, the impressive *The Ice Storm*...



FILM 4

... an actor John Depp comes cropper in his first directing effort, *The Brave*

Eleven minutes of fame

CINEMA:
Andy Lavender
on Ewan
McGregor's big
short break

You doubtless remember Ewan McGregor, shaven-headed and heroin-ravaged, in *Trainspotting*. You recall him collaborating with his flatmates in the dismemberment of a dead lodger in *Shallow Grave*. Or submitting to the artful ministrations of his calligrapher-lover in Peter Greenaway's *The Pillow Book*. But do you also remember the Byronic-haired young man, grieving the death of his brother in black-and-white in *Family Style*?

At 11 minutes long the film was easy to miss, but it still glimmers in McGregor's memory. Its writer, Matthew Cooper, provided one of the winning scripts in the first season, four years ago, of the Lloyds Bank Channel Four Film Challenge. McGregor had already shot to prominence in Dennis Potter's *Lipstick On Your Collar*, but *Family Style* also proved something of a calling card.

"I've never had a showreel as such," he says, "but I was so proud of the film that I showed it to a lot of people. It's been really useful to me." Useful, too, to its creative team. Cooper is now writing a feature film screenplay for British Screen/Miramax, and director Justin Chadwick has just made another short film starring McGregor.

The Film Challenge has propelled the careers of a respectable list of young writers and directors, and another



Ewan McGregor, star of *Trainspotting* and, more recently, television's *ER*, attributes his initial success to the Lloyds Bank Channel Four Film Challenge

batch of newcomers are now knocking on the door. This year's six winning entries have just been announced, and their work will be screened on Channel Four in the autumn.

Madeleine French and Kate Iles of Compulsive Viewing, producers of the series, received more than 2,000 scripts from wannabe writers aged between 11 and 25. "Young people tend to deal with quite large issues," says French.

"Loss, death — always a lot of death — and characters on personal emotional voyages. You get quite a lot in the style of the latest big hit on TV or in the cinema. Many of them were sub-*Trainspotting*. The year before, a lot of them were sub-*Four Weddings and a Funeral*. But in my job I get a huge amount of scripts coming across my desk, and I can honestly say that the most refreshing come from this

scheme." French and Iles reduce their mountain to a molehill of 30 scripts, whose creators are invited to a day's workshop in Manchester or London. They meet professionals from the industry, go through common problems and procedures and are given half-an-hour's individual tuition on their project. They can then rewrite their work and the new batch is whittled down to a shortlist of 18 scripts which are read by a team of judges from within the film and TV industries.

Four of the six winning writers this year are women. The youngest, Kathryn Pugsley, is 17 and is in the midst of A levels. The realisation of each film is also in the hands of relative newcomers. Each writer is matched with a director aged under 30. "The directors are a bit further down the line," explains French. "They will have

made one or two short films, and possibly worked for the satellite TV companies, but they won't have been employed by network television."

French and Iles look through 450 showreels then interview 30 aspirants — a reminder of the hordes of young people making their bid for recognition. McGregor is in no doubt as to the scheme's value. "Matthew Cooper was 17 when we worked with him," he says. "This guy is just driven to write, and if it wasn't for something like this, he would never have been found out, unless it was years down the line when he finally plugged through. This was an incredibly nice way in for him, a great window, and one of the only windows there are to get a short film made and get your work seen."

Each film is shot in three days. "It's a really intense

Picking plums out of Cames

Geoff Brown samples the dull and the delicious at the film festival

American backpacker overheard on the Rue d'Antibes: "Let's see if we can find McDonalds." The emporium was straight ahead, beyond a new branch of Planet Hollywood, opened in time to host the more showbiz-oriented Cannes parties. Cannes likes to eat fast food too, though most of the critics are more interested in escaping the diet they get all too easily back home.

So what have the great chefs of world cinema been cooking? Francesco Rosi, now in his mid-seventies, provided an earnest, largely dull treatment of Primo Levi's book *The Truce*, describing the writer's trek home from Auschwitz after the Second World War. John Turturro performs creditably as the young intellectual observing from a distance; but the project's lengthy preparation seems to have dampened Rosi's fire.

Marco Bellocchio, another Italian revered more for his past than his present, served up a German play, Kleist's *The Prince of Homburg*, drenched in a stylised, almost fairy-tale sauce. It was not to most tastes, though if you focused hard there were minor pleasures in the shadowy visuals and the inner torment of the Prince (Andrea Di Stefano, a brooding newcomer).

Ingmar Bergman offered a bigger feast in *Private Confessions*. He was not the director: Liv Ullmann performed that function, holding tight to the cast's faces. But he wrote the script, delving into his parents' past as in *The Best Intentions*, describing — with insight — a stale marriage and its adjacent affair. Players, too, come from *The Best Intentions*: Pernilla August is admirable as the wilful wife. Wim Wenders was also strutting his stuff. These days he's quite a globe-trotter: for *The End of Violence* he visited LA, wrapping a standard paranoia thriller in enough fancy

art-house pizazz to disguise it completely. Bill Pullman plays a Hollywood producer whose trademark is stylised violence. (See an FBI file lands in his mail, he experiences violence at first hand and starts anew, a murder suspect, confounding wife and office. Wenders surveys the scene with an artist's eye but ruins the effect of reful sequences with crosscutting and shallow philosophy.)

Ang Lee was in firm control for *The Ice Storm*, one of the competition's most satisfying entries. The Taiwanese director brings a foreigner's eye to the place and period: a wealthy Connecticut suburb in 1973, when an ice storm blows in during Thanksgiving.

The manners of the time are crucial, for the script (based on Rick Moody's novel) looks at parents at children caught in cross-winds from the Sixties, testing boundaries, searching for their inner selves. Win Kline and Sigourney Weaver head an excellent cast, alert to the humour; this portrait of imposter families.

Away from the competition, Nery came up smiling with *Junk Mail*, a compact black comedy shot in shades of mucky green, about a man who lands in hot water poking into other people's business. First-time director Pål Sletten displays off-beat humour and delight in dingy, misty lives.

John Depp should think twice about abandoning acting after a directorial debut *The Brave*, a mess of foolish images rung round the plight of Native American facing his last week of life. This was one of those movies unwieldy the press at 3.30 in the morning: not the best time for watching frighteningly sightlike sex silhouetted against orange sun, or Marlon Brando playing the harmonica.

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■ FILM 5

Muhammad Ali meets George Foreman in the Oscar-winning documentary, *When We Were Kings*

■ FILM 6

Unimaginable beauty and terror are revealed in *Microcosmos* — and the only actors in it are insects

THE FILMS ARTS

■ FILM 7

A natural history museum is under siege in the tiresome new horror thriller, *The Relic*

■ NEW VIDEOS

Plenty of oompah: *Brassed Off*, Mark Herman's film about a Yorkshire colliery band, is available to rent

CINEMA: Geoff Brown sees Ali and some heavyweight creepy-crawlies battle for top honours. Plus video reviews

Muhammad when he was the mountain

Non-fiction cinema makes a strong showing this week. It helps enormously that the main attraction of *When We Were Kings*, this year's Oscar winner for Best Documentary Feature, is Muhammad Ali: what fictional creation could compare with this charismatic, principled and playful giant, who boxed and talked his way into history and became a beacon of Black Power?

Leon Gast's joyous film, in the works for 22 years, takes us back to 1974, when the flamboyant Ali was pitted against the sullen world heavyweight champion George Foreman in a fight known as the "Rumble in the Jungle". This was no ordinary contest. It took place in Zaire, President Mobutu was willing to pay for the world's attention and, as Ali reasoned, a boxing context was cheaper than going to war. The wily promoter Don King surrounded the event with a festival of black music. Hoping to film an Afro-American *Woodstock*, Gast, maker of documentaries on *Hell's Angels* gangs and the Grateful Dead, came over. When the fight was delayed for six weeks he stayed put, filming Ali as he mingled with crowds, weakened Foreman with psychological warfare, and charmed the world's press.

The contest concluded, on October 29, with Foreman felled by Ali's punch in the eighth round. Gast himself was far from victory, for he had no money to process his footage. Over the years, the project's focus changed: the music crept to the sidelines, and Ali stormed to centre stage. Archive footage was deftly woven in to flesh out the portrait. Hollywood's Taylor Hackford lent his expertise, and new interviews were conducted with "rumble" onlookers such as Norman Mailer, and the ubiquitous Spike Lee.

Nothing they say, however, matters next to the words and actions of the exuberant Ali, vintage 1975: a hero who makes modern sports stars look soulless and grey. If you fear films about boxing, be pacified: this is a film about humanity triumphant.

There is no technological reason why cinema must have a human face. You can make a film from abstract patterns,

You can train the camera's lens on machinery, mountains, bread and butter, blood, corpses, dust mites or copulating gnats. These subjects, however, have remained the preserve of fringe groups: experimentalists, scientists, suppliers of classroom material. Most people are happier if the films feature Johnny Depp, Demi Moore or Gérard Depardieu.

Microcosmos reveals what we are missing. Its actors are insects, shot over a three-year period in a meadow in the Aveyron region of southern France. This astonishing film takes us through their day, from dawn to dusk, by the miracle of microscopic photography. There is unimaginable beauty and terror in the world under our feet. Falling raindrops become cannonballs. Blades of grass form an impenetrable forest. Spiders, beetles, ants and bumble bees fill the screen, making love and war, and suffering the comic accidents of daily life. What price Buster Keaton when you can laugh at the dung beetle pushing its load over rough terrain, stumbling over, rolling backwards: the myth of Sisyphus in insect form.

But human footprints are everywhere in *Microcosmos*.

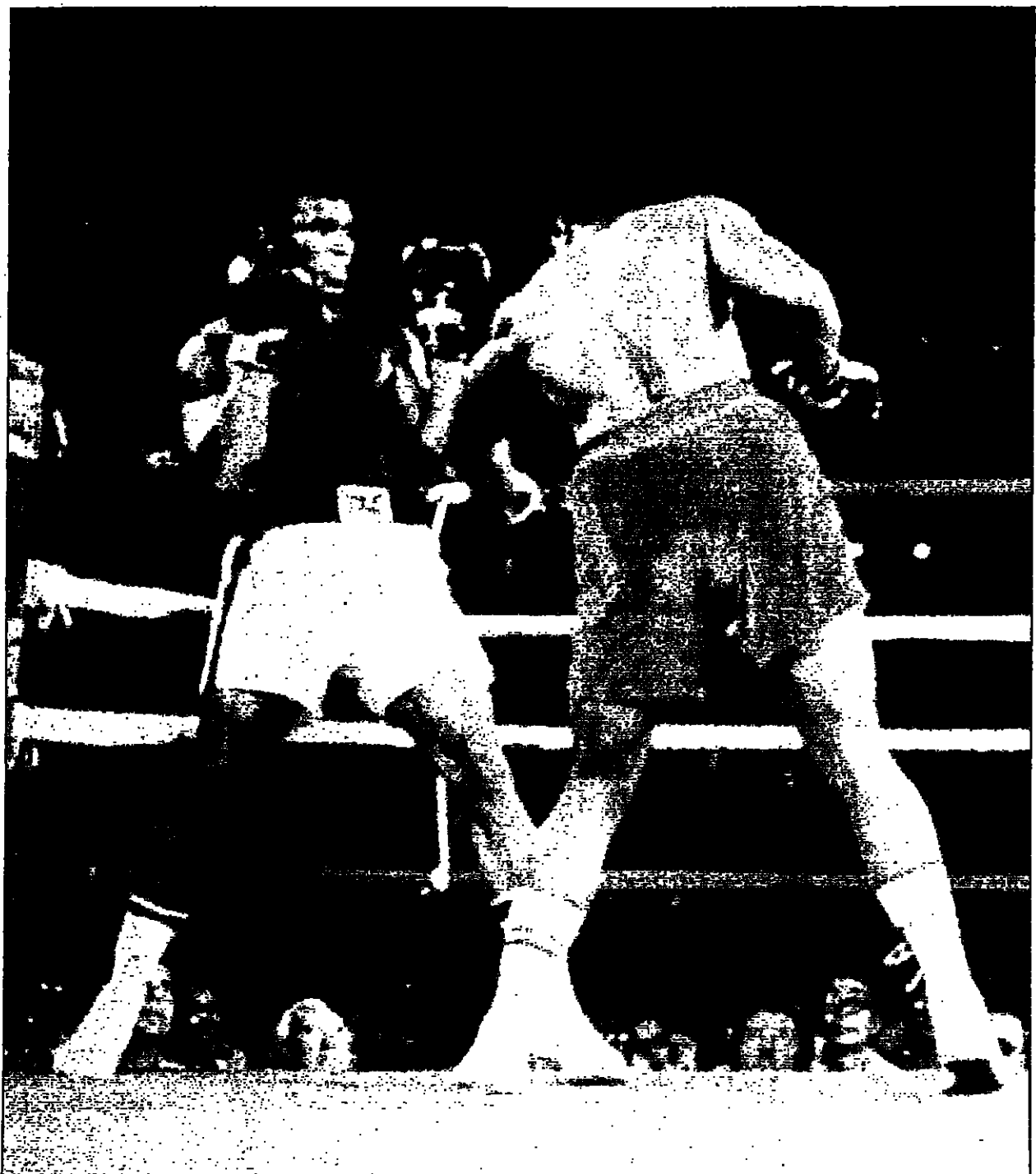
This is no raw slice of life: the insects' day has been stage-managed by the directors, Claude Nussidany and Marie Perennou, two biologists with a showman's instincts. Editing and music avoid the anthropomorphic excesses of Disney's *The Living World*, but the film is still heading in that direction. Everything is a little over-processed, which prevents the images ever finding their own identity and soaring up into the surreal realm of Jean Painlevé's famous short films about underwater life (now available on video).

Within its limits, though, *Microcosmos* offers a wonderful feast from an unknown world. Here are dewdrops vanishing with the sun's rays. A ladybird breakfasts on a greenfly. Two snails go to it on a bed of moss. Dragonflies give a beautiful air show; the bizarre argyronet spider steals air bubbles from the surface of water to create a diving bell. You want violence? Here it is in plenty: an ant heap destroyed, caterpillars paralysed by wasps and fed to their larvae, stag beetles bashing each other to bits. If this cast were human, the film's certificate would be 18; why, it might even be banned.

There is no narration. No species names are supplied until the final credits; you are encouraged to stare, not learn. But you are staring, at least, at miraculous sights that make your average fictional movie shrivel in the mind to nothing.

The very title, *Killer: A Journal of Murder*, chills the bones, and the news that Oliver Stone served as executive producer hardly warms us up. Then consider the actor who plays the killer: James Woods, expert at playing nasty excuses for human beings, like his braggart racist in the current *Ghosts from the Past*. His character is Carl Panzram, a prisoner in Leavenworth in 1929. Arrested for burglary, he later admits to killing 21 people, and to prove his point bludgeons to death a sadistic prison officer.

But this movie, made in 1995 by a first-time director, Tim Metcalfe, is far from being an exercise in perverse titillation. Based on a true story, it draws an absorbing drama from the relationship between this unrepentant criminal and the young, bespectacled, liberal



Muhammad Ali boxes his way into history in the joyous *When We Were Kings* — a film about humanity triumphant

SNAP VERDICT

'Ringside punch'

Every week, young film fans discuss some of the latest releases...

■ WHEN WE WERE KINGS

Leslie Isaiah Thomas, 18: As someone who despises boxing, I was surprised by this portrait of a highly intelligent and spiritual man. Damian Samuels, 19: Take up your ringside seat for a film that has a real punch. Tim Thornton, 21: A fascinating documentary rendered cinema-worthy by Ali's knockout performances in and out of the ring. Sarah Crook, 18: Champion!!

■ KILLER: A JOURNAL OF MURDER

Leslie: It killed me with its lack of originality. Damian: The *Shawshank Redemption* and *Silence of the Lambs* meet in this run-of-the-mill thriller. Tim: Another film which presents the serial killer as charismatic. Sarah: James Woods was great but the Disney-style narrator was risible.

■ HIGH SCHOOL HIGH

Leslie: My chuckle-o-meter peaked. Damian: St Trinians for the 1990s: a side-splitting comedy. Tim: Jon Lovitz remains just this side of irritating in this one-liner filled romp. Sarah: Hilarious riot.

NEW ON VIDEO

■ BRASSED OFF

Film Four, 15, 1996. A YORKSHIRE colliery band fights for survival in this fluently made British film from director Mark Herman. The year is 1992. Pits are closing, but the band is up for the National Championships. What to do? The ingredients don't always blend: lots of oompah and heart-warming comedy, plus shameless melodrama and a dash of social realism. The cast includes

It is no good looking for serious endeavour from the director Peter Hyams, specialist in splashy hokum such as *Sudden Death* and *Timecop*. His latest film is *The Relic*. Does the title refer to the script? Certainly enough fragments of past movies clutter this tiresome horror thriller about a natural history museum under siege from a DNA cocktail called Kothoga.



Tara Fitzgerald in the very British *Brassed Off*

Ewan McGregor, Pete Postlethwaite and Tara Fitzgerald. Available to rent.

■ A BILL OF DIVORCEMENT

Cinema Club, PG, 1932. AFTER a series of eye-catching stage performances, Katharine Hepburn made a notable screen debut as the loyal daughter in Clementine Dane's melodramatic play. You can see the seeds of future greatness, although acting honours remain with an unusually controlled John Barrymore as the insane husband who returns home, cured, to find his wife (Billie Burke) about to remarry. Heavily dated, but still very watchable.

■ LE BONHEUR EST DANS LE PRE

Guild World Cinema, 15, 1996. LAVATORY seat manufacturer Michel Serrault flees domestic woes and a screaming wife by attaching himself to Carmen Maura's family, 300 miles to the south. Etienne Chabrier's very French comedy features plenty of food and drink, Eric Cantona and his brother Joel, and a slim premise stretched too far. The cast's skills and allure keep you watching. Available to rent and buy.

■ DRACULA

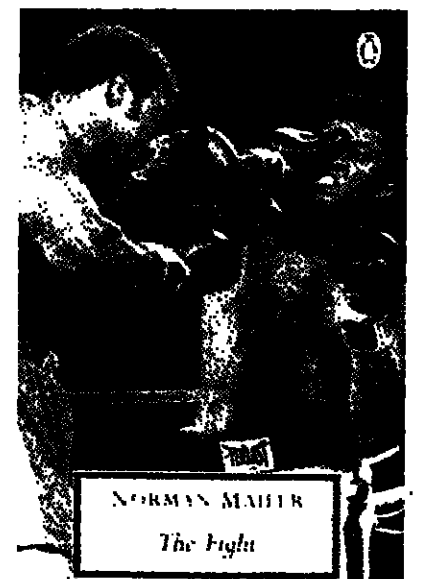
Warner Terror Vision 15, 1958. AFTER dishing up *Frankenstein* in succulent colour, Hammer found even greater popular success with Bram Stoker's famous character. Cameraman Jack Asher and the art department go to town with red velvet curtains, stone-flagged corridors and menacing shadows, while director Terence Fisher's measured pace allows us plenty of time to sup on the horrors. Christopher Lee's bloodthirsty Count blends menace with suave charm, while Peter Cushing is an incisive adversary as Van Helsing.

■ THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS

Fox Guild, U, 1996. DISAPPOINTING adaptation of Kenneth Grahame's children's classic, set in an England of green fields, steam trains and animals in pull-overs. Writer, director and Toad impersonator Terry Jones threatens the original's gentle charm with heavy Pythonesque humour. Jones's cohorts include Eric Idle (Rat), Steve Coogan (Mole) and Antony Sher (Chief Weasel), but the effect they make, like the film as a whole, is very haphazard. Available to rent.

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Showing the skull beneath the 18th-century consumer's skin: Robert Dighton's *Death and Life Contrasted*, 1784

Jonathan Clark upholds the values of curmudgeonly learning against the packaging of the past

Hello! to liberty, prosperity, vacuity

Do you remember social history? Those high hopes and programmatic statements of the 1950s? The springtime of the 1960s? The ideological battles of the 1970s? The brave rearguard actions of the 1980s? Do you remember seeing *Past & Present* as it landed on the door-mat, each issue promising a new vision of the world? Did you follow with awe the achievements of the *Annals* school, that exemplary fusion of theory and practice?

If so, do you ever ask yourself why everything has now gone so quiet? Perhaps a major project in the organising of our sense of the past has lost its momentum and been reabsorbed into the ordinary perceptions of present consciousness.

G. M. Trevelyan began it all, with his definition of social history as history with the politics left out. But his version was so popular because his vision of the English past turned out to be so familiar. Trevelyan's pages contained no subversive surprises. Readers of his *Illustrated Social History of England* would be entertained, charmed, delighted, but they would ultimately be reassured.

Yet perhaps Trevelyan only seemed to have left out the politics. Look more closely and the old Whig scenario was still there. Trevelyan himself had a sharp axe to grind in religious matters. Perhaps for emancipation from old conflicts we have to wait until the real end of ideology, the era formally initiated on May 2, 1997.

It began earlier, of course. One small symptom was the way in which our history books came to resemble the glossy catalogues of major exhibitions at the Tate or the National Gallery: elegantly printed, superbly illustrated, consumer goods in their own right. As a friend of curmudgeonly learning and recondite research, I deplore all this in vain. In my heart of hearts, I know that the future lies with a slick and smoothly packaged version of our history. Protest is futile in a world shaped by its admen and its spin doctors.

What I notice most about books like this, however, is less the magnificence of the medium than the bland agreeableness of the message. The historical equivalents of *Hello!* magazine wisely contain little to deter prospective purchasers. Consumerism, Brew-

THE PLEASURES OF THE IMAGINATION

English Culture in the 18th Century

By John Brewer

HarperCollins, £30

ISBN 0 00 255337 9

er assures us, was the keynote of 18th-century culture. Why, spoil eager enjoyment with awkward argument?

Why, indeed? If politics, ideology, religion and war are off the agenda at last, dismissed as distractions to healthy hedonism, we can focus on the things that now bulk large in the life of man. And here they all are, evoked in Brewer's pages with evident relish: this is a book essentially about how people of leisure, and especially the intelligentsia, entertained themselves.

No foxhunting squires or gin-swilling mobs intrude (even the Wilkesite urban artisans are de-selected — no "old labour" here). This is a book about "high culture", and that means, for Brewer, the world of authors, publishers,

and readers; the artists and art connoisseurs; the theatre and the theatre-goers; the musicians and music lovers.

What unites them — indeed, what moves John Brewer to rescue these dead artefacts from museums, galleries and archives — is what he sees as the keen commercial sense, "the dynamism of those who produced, sold and enjoyed the arts". Money makes his world go round, not power, ambition, ideology or religion. And who, today, will say that he is wrong?

As an organising category, cultural entrepreneurship should never be underestimated. Then as now, authors who neglected marketing were sunk, as Sir John Hawkins's history of music was promoted by his own book on the subject, and as the same Hawkins's life of Johnson was successfully denigrated to promote James Boswell's. No matter if Hawkins's books were better, on both subjects.

On-page after page, we find we agree with the argument already. "The arts became more commercial and less courtly because they

became more urban... The rise of the arts in England was the triumph of a commercial and urban society... Liberty and prosperity went hand in hand... Variety, energy, noise — these were the first impressions of visitors to London... A commercial theatre must appeal to an audience... "Only in former academic genres might these seem statements of the obvious: in today's world, where illustrations take the place of footnotes, they must be just what is required."

This is a book which you might give without qualms to your teenage children. It will do them no harm. They will be informed, and entertained. They might be less than grateful only if they have been taught to think of the past as a body of evidence of which historians ask hard questions and demand important answers. But in today's schools, there is evidently little danger of that.

Jonathan Clark is a contributor to *Virtual History: Alternatives and Counterfactuals*, edited by Niall Ferguson and published by Pion, priced £20.

History from a new perspective

Lisa Jardine on how climbing church scaffolding reveals a marriage of science and art

There is a wonderful moment in Judith Field's *The Invention of Infinity* when she resolves scholarly dispute about the brilliantly foreshortened barrel vault in Masaccio's *Trinity* fresco in Florence (circa 1426). Where art historians have pontificated about the possible mathematical constructions that Masaccio might have used, Field persuades a friendly church official to put up scaffolding and inspect the painted surface herself close up, taking her measurements directly from there: "It took no more than a glance to see the absurdity of the suggestion made by some art historians that God the Father's displacement from the central axis might be accidental. An underdrawing line made while the plaster was wet marked the axis, in the central rib of the vault, and another underdrawing line ran down the Father's nose. Their horizontal separation turned out to be 2.6cm."

She works out that Masaccio adjusted the mathematics of his vault to make it visually correct — the maths is faulty, but it looks right to the observer on the ground.

Such verve is characteristic of this compelling book. Field takes us into the everyday world of craftsmen's calcu-

THE INVENTION OF INFINITY

Mathematics and Art in the Renaissance

By J. V. Field

OUP, £25

ISBN 0 19 523947 7

THE MEASURE OF REALITY

Quantification and Western Society, 1250-1600

By Alfred W. Crosby

Cambridge University Press, £19.95

ISBN 0 521 55427 6

tions, and shows us an emerging mathematics of solid forms and projective geometry. As the technical sophistication of these increases, so too does the virtuosity of contemporary paintings — many of which are reproduced in this lavishly illustrated book. Mathematics and arts are clearly equally delightful for Field, and she transmits that enjoyment to the reader. Field still dreams about Masaccio's brushwork. I was left with an

image of her, swinging in rapure through the arched spaces of Santa Maria Novella, just like Juliette Binoche in the film of *The English Patient*.

If Field makes the reader believe that with a little application any of us can grasp the subtle relationship between technical mathematics and high Renaissance art, Alfred Crosby's *The Measure of Reality* brings us down to earth with a bump. Crosby's project is to show that number and precise measurement were the motor that drove the success of Western imperialism.

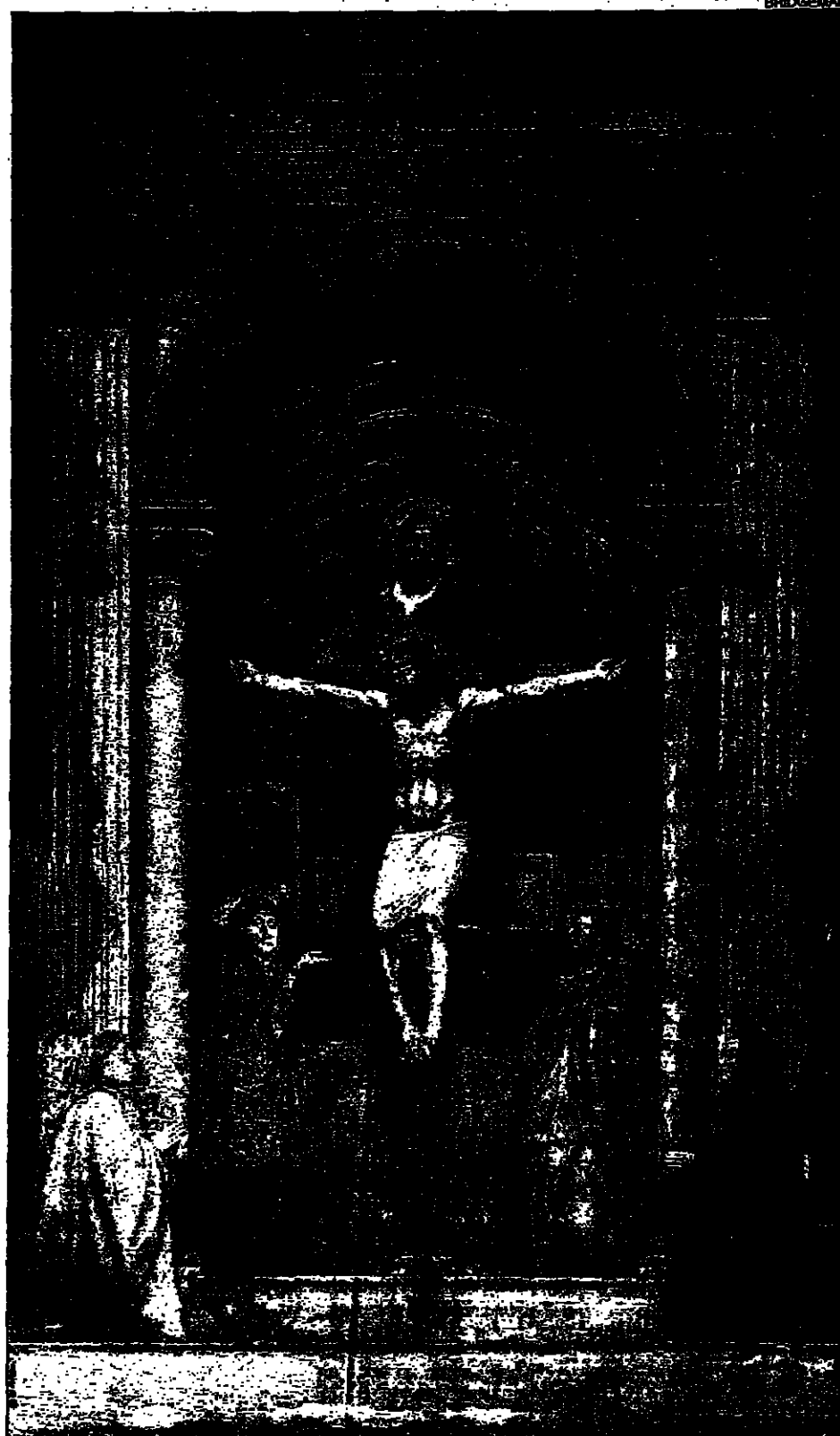
In the course of the 15th century, he argues, West Europeans evolved a new, more purely visual and quantitative way of perceiving time, space and their material environment. "They thus became world leaders in science, and created many of the greatest masterpieces of Western music and painting." The claims that Crosby makes are sweeping; they also turn out to involve an awful lot of arm waving in place of any real explanation.

Sometimes what Crosby means by quantity is precise — like Field he regards the development of mathematical perspective as critical for art. Sometimes his usage is metaphorical: "The clock provided Westerners with a new way of imagining."

Mostly, though, the tantalising fragmentary glimpses of the quantified world — the clock, navigation, musical notation, book-keeping — yield large, unsubstantiated generalisations. Besides these being largely rhetorical devices, they are also probably not true. "There were no people on earth more concerned with coins than Westerners, no people who worried more about their weight and purity, no people on earth more obsessed with counting and counting." What about the much admired mercantile and banking practices of 15th-century Muslims to the East?

Crosby's limitations are nowhere more evident, inevitably, than when he comes to deal with perspective in art. "Artists of the Renaissance avant-garde, who were often architects, engineers, artisans and mathematicians as well as painters, were obsessed with space-as-geometry." Crosby proceeds to quote Piero della Francesca's arithmetic on how to calculate the volume of a barrel of flour, leaving the reader bewildered as to how this might have helped a painter's understanding of perspective. No climbing on the scaffolding to give the reader a closer look here.

Lisa Jardine's *Worldly Goods* is published by Macmillan, priced £25.



The view from below: Masaccio's *Holy Trinity*; Santa Maria Novella, Florence

A taste for Strong meat

Alistair McAlpine

DIARIES

1967-1987

By Roy Strong

Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £20

ISBN 0 297 81841 4

On Saturday, May 3, during an interview with Jason Cowley, Sir Roy Strong claimed that he wanted to be forgiven. "I want to be forgiven no more to be forgiven," said Sir Roy. His diaries, he claims, are a work of reconciliation. If these diaries seek reconciliation, then the reincarnation of Anita the Hun is a suitable applicant for the post of director at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

What may well, in Sir Roy's mind, have set out to be a work of reconciliation has turned out to be a tragedy. A tragedy for Sir Roy because, in as much as he really tells us anything about himself, he describes a highly intelligent fellow, perhaps even a genius, perpetually set upon by the forces of evil who try to keep him from his true destiny, greatness. The other characters in this drama — and almost every name from the list of the good and the great play a part — are, however, never touched in any depth. There are no insights into their characters, just descriptions of their dress, upholstery and floral arrangements. They dance around the poor fellow as he bemoans his ill-fortune; he seems unable to decide with any consistency whether they are evil spirits or good fairies.

Lord Carrington, for instance, comforts him in his distress and attempts to guide him through adversity. A kindly fellow, he is treated thus, in 1985: "Carrington came to see me today, very low and moody. Probably because someone has written a book attacking him. We are now at the end of the road. He knows that he has been a flop. He was good at the start, marvellous at the start, marvellous at the start, up front, beaming and a twinkle. But this year it has all been beyond him. He caves in every time to the heavy gang. He was completely overruled by them at the last trustees' meeting when he was forced to accept headline voluntary donations. He sits there listless and flapping around, with no edge and not an original thought and no help at all. He is a fairweather prodigy."

It seems that all the wretched Lord Carrington was trying to do was to tell Strong bad news kindly — that the core of his trustees at the V & A had no time for him. These diaries have the prick of the cat's claw about them. Some people, however, may



Strong: reconciliation?

take the view that the cat concerned is a tiger rather than a tabby. Sir Terence Conran, at first seen by Sir Roy as a supporter, becomes as this tragedy progresses a villain. Strong, the prototype of the showman, museum director, became for Conran a self-interested opportunist. In time Sir Terence became Strong's chief tormenter. In the end rather than shoot him, the trustees gave a loaded pistol to Sir Roy who handed it on to Lord Carrington, indicating that the directorship of the National Gallery was probably the right post for him. That, it appears, was out of the question and so once again the luckless Carrington struggled

with the problem of his trustees and their director.

It is strange that Strong should take against Conran's commercial instincts. He quotes him, saying, about Roubillac's bust of Lord Chesterfield: "What do we want a work by that foreigner for? I know someone who can make a copy of that, so you'd not notice the difference." It was Strong's commercial streak that attracted him to Conran, it was Conran's publishing company, Conran Octopus, that commissioned Strong's best-selling work, *Creating Small Gardens*. It was an inspired choice. The combination of that title and Sir Roy Strong was a tremendous success: the book sold over a quarter of a million copies.

The best diarists are not people who direct events. It is so in the case of Nicolson, Clark and Channon. So it is with Roy Strong. His diaries are liberate and in the most part entertaining. They are also, more importantly, an invaluable reference book for those who have an interest in the people who have made up Britain's establishment during the last quarter of the 20th century.

Lord McAlpine's memoirs, *Once a Jolly Beggarman*, are published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson, priced £20.

Pigs in church

WEDDINGS can make even the most well-adjusted families behave like latter-day Montagues and Capulets, and the traditional rivalry between bride and groom's side in Daniel Evan Weiss's funny and disquieting novel is further exacerbated by religious intolerance. Allison Pennybaker, only daughter of a New England family proud of its WASP roots, becomes engaged to Solomon Benevise, whose family is Jewish. For Allison's fiercely devout mother, Louise, the proposed wedding is a calamity — a view shared by Miriam, Solomon's beautiful, widowed mother.

When, in a misguided attempt at reconciling her to the match, Solomon suggests to Miriam that she should trace the Benevise genealogy in order to draw up a "family tree" as a wedding present for himself and his future bride, he unwittingly sets in motion a train of events that leads to further rupture between the two families. Miriam's research uncovers the fact that the Benevises were Portuguese Jews forced to convert to

Christina Koning

THE SWINE'S WEDDING

By Daniel Evan Weiss

Serpent's Tail, £11.99

ISBN 9 781852 424190

Christianity by the Inquisition, and contemptuously referred to as *marranos* (swine) by their oppressors. The more she reads of the appalling cruelties to which her ancestors were subjected in the name of Christ, the more determined Miriam becomes that her only son must not be allowed to betray his heritage by getting married in a Christian church.

As even this brief summary will suggest, Weiss's novel deals with serious ideas, but does so in a way which is almost surrealistic, so that one never feels one is being preached at or lectured. In fact, despite the harrowing nature of some of its material — notably the passages describing Miriam Benevise's imaginative reconstruction of the horrors of an *auto-da-fé* — this is a very enjoyable book. The device of sharing the narrative between Allison and her reluctant prospective mother-in-law quietly underlines the book's main theme as well as providing some of its best comic moments.

The family dinner where Solomon is first exposed to Louise Pennybaker's condescending bigotry is one such episode; another is the initial encounter between Allison and Miriam, whose subtly differing accounts of the meeting point up the ironies of their relationship. Unusually, for a novel by a male author, men play an almost entirely passive role in *The Swine's Wedding*. It is the women who are most forcefully realised, and who are given the first — and last — word in this tale about star-crossed lovers.

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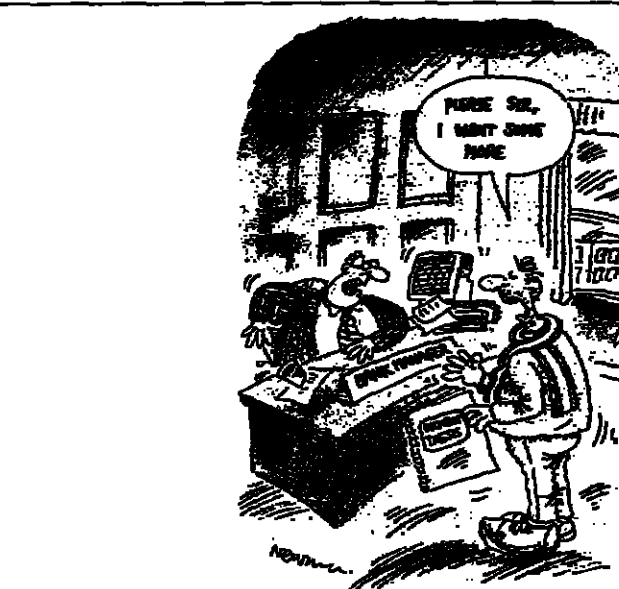
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Diplomacy at a certain expense

Hong Kong's first Governor quarrelled with London but got on with the Chinese, finds Percy Cradock

With so many books on the last Governor of Hong Kong coming off the press, it is a relief to turn back to simpler times and read about the first in the line: Sir Henry Pottinger, proclaimed Governor on June 26, 1843, also Chief Superintendent of Trade, Plenipotentiary and Minister Extraordinary. In his official portrait he sits holding the Treaty of Nanking, which concluded the First Opium War and made Hong Kong Island a British possession. He looks testy and threatening. Not a conventional diplomatic figure.

His background was Ulster and India. He had an Irish brogue and a short temper. He began as a lieutenant of infantry in the East India Company's service, fought in the Maratha Wars and graduated to political agent. As Resident in Sind, he browbeat the Amirs and secured safe passage across that barren land for the troops committed to the disastrous First Afghan War. He went on to other colonial appointments, unwillingly to the Cape Province and finally back to India as Governor of Madras. Hong Kong was only an interlude in a long career, though this biography naturally seeks to make it the centrepiece.

What did he accomplish in China? The author argues that without him we would never have obtained Hong Kong. Certainly in Whitehall there was no great appetite for acquisition. Lord Palmerston preferred arrangements for opening up several treaty ports on the China coast, and, if we had to have an island, would have opted for one further north. Lord Aberdeen, his successor as Foreign Secretary, saw islands as useful bargaining counters, but to retain one "would be attended with great and certain expense".

Lord Stanley, at the Colonial Office, another of Pottinger's masters, wanted all building on Hong Kong halted. It was a confused time: in the course of the hostilities with China, a Tory Government took over from the Whigs. There was a new Governor-General in India (whose jurisdiction also covered China), instructions from London took months to arrive.

Among these uncertainties and hesitations Pottinger stuck to the need for Hong Kong and was sufficiently successful in his military and diplomatic operations to be able to present the acquisition to London as a fait accompli. Peel gracefully gave way and approved *leux de joie* at the Tower and Hyde Park to mark the

conclusion of the Nanking Treaty. Poor Captain Elliot, who two years earlier had first taken Hong Kong, but had then been outmanoeuvred in negotiations with the Chinese, had had a different reception: he was reprimanded and recalled. As the book notes, Pottinger, however unpolished as a diplomat, was shrewd in handling the authorities in London. It was the right combination of qualities for the time.

Dealing with the Chinese required less finesse. With a fleet of 72 vessels to hand, and with two ships of the line moored under the walls of Nanjing, it was merely a matter of repeating British demands and setting a date for the bombardment. According to a Chinese report, "to all representations, the barbarian

Pottinger only knit his brows and said, 'No.' Negotiation was easier in those days.

As Governor, Pottinger was given the widest of briefs: Lord Stanley told him "methods of proceeding unknown in other British Colonies must be followed." He was interfering and irascible. He quarrelled with his service chiefs and, as Governors have done since, with the British merchants.

Curiously, he got on well with the Chinese. One of the oddest episodes in Sino-British relations at the time was the visit to Hong Kong in June 1843 of Kiyung, the Imperial commissioner, who came to exchange ratifications of the treaty. Kiyung embraced Pottinger as a brother, offered to adopt the Governor's son and persuaded him to exchange pictures of wives.

"The English barbarians," he told the Emperor, "think much of women and little of men." For a time this style of softening the enemy was in favour in Beijing, but later, as Western depredations continued, the wind changed and Kiyung was sent a silken bowstring with which to strangle himself.

This is a pleasant but undistinguished biography. It brings little new information, on China at least, and Pottinger, who was a distinctly lively man, never quite comes to life in it. But it is interesting to look back, particularly this year, to an historic moment, the first forcible encounter between China and the West and to remember one of the leading and more fortunate actors.

The Rt Hon Sir Percy Cradock was Ambassador to China from 1978 to 1984 and the Prime Minister's Foreign Policy Adviser from 1984 to 1992. His book, Experiences of China, was published in 1994.



Chinese artillerymen, 19th century

SIR HENRY POTTINGER
First Governor of Hong Kong
By George Pottinger
Sutton Publishing, £20
ISBN 0 7509 1468 8

James Woodall on three Brazilian novels energised by cinematic imagery



Playfulness and danger: street children play in Rio de Janeiro — but such children are thought to have been murdered to curb street crime

Still a million things to say

Before I start, I must declare an interest: when I encountered Chico Buarque's first novel *Turbulence* in 1992, I had no idea who he was. Five years later, he is the subject of my third book.

I should stress that the Buarque I have come to love is a composer — of sambas and bossa novas which over three decades have become part of the texture of Brazilian life. Buarque's novelistic voice is entirely new. He can only hope that readers will listen to it with entirely new ears.

Buarque has admitted to me that it is difficult for people — Brazilians, mainly — to accept that a man whose music millions grew up with has turned author. *Turbulence* was a bestseller in his home country, but *Benjamin* has had a harder time of it. Brazil's favourite pop stars seem to be getting irremediably serious between hard covers.

Buarque is a serious man; his first ambition was to be a writer. Now in his fifties, he

writes prose of verve, resonance and lyrical concision. As in *Turbulence*, the reader is given few clues in *Benjamin* about location and almost no narrative slack.

Benjamin Zambraia is an ex-model who relives his life in the seconds before his execution — for a misdemeanour which remains obscure. The city he moves about in is probably Rio de Janeiro. Buarque's own; but as in *Turbulence*, the unnamed city is a site of contrasts, haphazard meetings, teeming crowds, an emblem of chaos of an indisputably South American kind.

That is what all three books have in common: the urban landscape described by these authors and experienced by their narrators is unpredictable, and deeply threatening. Their narrative techniques owe more to cinematic image-making than to the staid procedures of European fiction. It should come as no surprise that while Buarque's *Benjamin* tries to piece together his life as if it were a

BENJAMIN
By Chico Buarque
Bloomsbury, £14.99
ISBN 0 7475 3015 7
THE KILLER
By Patricia Melo
Bloomsbury, £14.99
ISBN 0 7475 3014 9
THE LOST MANUSCRIPT
By Rubem Fonseca
Bloomsbury, £14.99
ISBN 0 7475 3031 0

film, both Patricia Melo and Rubem Fonseca are active screenwriters.

Of the three, Buarque's text is the most touching. Benjamin's memory flash amplifies an obsession: he pursues, more in his mind than on the street, a young estate agent, Ariela Masé, whose resemblance to an old lover drives him into situations he seems quite unable to control. He is easy to like, as is Ariela. We follow her turns of mind too, and her unwilling involvement in a noisy political

campaign offers further evidence of how character in much Latin American fiction is overwhelmed by the forces of accident: Brazil's mad reality squashes the intricacies of peoples' finer feelings.

By contrast, Patricia Melo's protagonist, Máique, is so unlikeable as to be almost funny. He starts off killing a local crook for a bet, then becomes a full-time blow-away of undesirables. Elevated to hero status for his pains, he gets hooked on murder just as other characters in the novel are hooked on sex or cocaine. (Máique indulges copiously in both additions.)

At one level, *The Killer* is a litany of grotesque acts of violence and sexual deviance — the language is rough, packed with ballistic expletives, the characters are never less than manipulative and vengeful. Life in the novel's distorted reality becomes very cheap. At another level, Melo's unrelentingly ugly tale has the insistence of parable: in a

society incapable of being bound by law (and Rio is one of the most lawless cities on earth), indiscriminate human destruction prevails.

Rubem Fonseca's *The Lost Manuscript* is less monotone and less unflinching than *The Killer*, and more reader-friendly than *Benjamin*. Along with Jorge Amado from Bahia, Fonseca is one of Brazil's most established and widely read novelists, and he writes with greater agility. This curious tale about a film director trying to make a film of a story by Russian writer Isaac Babel is the most "European" in feeling of the three; but if Bloomsbury proves anything by launching these unusual novels together (all share the same São Paulo publisher), it is that the energy of Latin American letters is not confined to Buenos Aires or Mexico City. The modern Brazilian novel has arrived.

James Woodall's *A Simple Brazilian Song* will be published next month by Little, Brown.

Despite its eccentric title, this is an autobiography. Despite his eccentric tone, Lord Peyton is a politician. Though now retired, he was a notable Cabinet Minister who stood against Margaret Thatcher and others for the leadership of the Conservative Party. Never ill-disposed towards her, he was not content to play the courier and she fired him out.

On reaching No 10 she dispersed with his services. He went to see her. "Prime Minister," I said, "I have three things I want to say, and if I don't say them now I'll never get them out. First I want you to know how hurt and angry I was and am at the way you have behaved to me. Secondly, despite what I have just said, I shall not be looking for an opportunity to get my own back; I hope for all our sakes that you will be successful. Thirdly, I think you would do well to be more careful when it comes to choosing your friends, some of them may prove less reliable than you suppose when the weather changes. I have seen little or nothing of her since and retain mixed impressions."

And he hardly mentions her again. No streetfighter — and

A good scrubbing

Matthew Parris

WITHOUT BENEFIT OF LAUNDRY
By John Peyton
Bloomsbury, £16.99
ISBN 0 7475 3331 8



Peyton: a tot of lemon juice

possessing too keen a sense of the absurd (and of fun) for the parliamentary hard slog — John Peyton's generous heart and prosecuting intellect were never, after that, bent to government service. He departed to the corridors of the Commons and then the Lords, there to listen (as he puts it) "to the pitterpatter of the clay footsteps of those who hurry importantly along them" and to delight those colleagues and commentators who noticed him. Like the tot of undiluted lemon-juice his pucker features so often suggest he has just imbibed, Peyton is acid yet beneficent.

Less than half of this book is

about politics. An opening chapter in almost freeform style, evoking Twenties England as seen by a little boy, is immensely powerful. The chapters on his years as a prisoner-of-war will absorb any reader. His generosity constantly surprises, but throwaway comments on colleagues of whom he had a low opinion ("Sir Harold was not one who left much of a mark on anything, save perhaps the

turf on Wimbledon golf course) are delicious.

Cogent, mordant and perceptive, Peyton is a master of the telling phrase ("a maiden speech... is a nerve-racking occasion, but rather like being sick, you feel better when it is over") but too thoughtful to be slick. His sparing but honest accounts of personal failure convey pain in simple language. I was moved by his report, in minimalist prose, of the death of his little son, Charlie. Accompanied by the self-regarding recollections of public men, one is brought up short by his description of the end of his first marriage, and, with it, the memory of failure, irredeemable, of having done someone who least deserved it a grievous injury.

Above all I was struck by the quality of his writing. John Peyton is a stylist of old-fashioned intensity. "Memory has no rules or regular habits; it loses much that was important and yet clings on to and preserves quite small things which, like stray, unconnected footprints, have escaped erosion by the winds and tides of time. Recalling people, times, places and events is, to an extent, an affair of chance. Many are lost beyond recovery: of the remainder, some, glimpsed for a moment like a fish in clear, still water, vanish as you move towards them; the outstretched hand comes back empty save for some bits of unmemorable debris from the bed of the stream. Others are easily retrieved, as if from a computer; others again, without aids and regardless of time, are unforgettable, always with you. It is as if memory were a camera used with varying degrees of skill, sometimes in a poor light and at other times, though aimed and focused, without a film."

But he does remember, as junior Minister of Power, going down a coalmine, seeing the privations of those who laboured there, then talking to one of the miners. "Sir," said the man, "I never expected to meet anyone like you, let alone talk to him."

"What on earth," I wondered, "have we done to one another?" It wasn't a question which called for an answer, and we didn't have one anyhow.

READING *Out of Me* (Viking, £15.99, ISBN 0 670 8704 4), a bleak account, by Fiona Shaw — a happily-married academic with one lovely daughter — of the rapid descent into hell which happened after the birth of her second, shock banishes the convention of "there but for the grace of God..." Suicidal, enduring electric shock treatment, injuring her own body in despair and self-disgust, Fiona Shaw's account of her madness is far from the experience of the average sufferer of "baby-blues". Her acute postnatal breakdown was the tip of an iceberg: the birth of her second child the trigger for an illness which began long, long before. The book is a brave attempt to untangle the reasons for it.

The genre of autobiography-as-therapy has inherent dangers, the principal one being distance. Fiona Shaw speaks of "the license to be interested in the invention that is your own life". At the start of *Out of Me* there were seconds when I wondered why I should be subjected to such personal agony yet was aware of the duty to review with care the "bitter misery" of a stranger. The uneasiness did not last. Fiona Shaw's triumph is twofold: she has managed to both externalise and universalise her private hell, so that the book can fit next to *An Angel at my Table* and *The Bell Jar*.

STUDYING her illness, she concludes, "the black flower of postnatal depression has its roots thrust deep into the soil of each person's life". Her quest for truth prizes her out of herself: "Wrapped in a black cloak I thought I was the only star in this particular dark sky. As I've recovered myself... I've noticed how dense a constellation of other women is clustered around me. I seem to have been inducted into a silent community."

The key to the book's success is writing like that — and structure. Four parts take us from what happened, though an attempt to unpick the

Birth pains

terrors of childhood, to an examination of the medical and psychiatric background, until finally we reach the present — the quest ending in the act of writing. Language is the means to approach what is beyond language: the past is a scream, but the present act of

writing harnesses that scream with skins of words.

The book is "out of me", Shaw writes, and the parallel with childbirth is inescapable. The child grew within, and triggered darkness; the book grew within, and opened a chink of light. Although Shaw is too honest to deal in happy endings, her relief is palpable: "I had no idea that my terror would give birth to a book".

Shaw's next challenge will be to transmute it into fiction.

BEL MOONEY

And granny too

Harriet Paterson

PETROLIO
By Pier Paolo Pasolini
Secker & Warburg, £9.99
ISBN 0 436 233 5 5

In an extended allegory about the metamorphosis of Italian society that took place in the Fifties and Sixties, Carlo sets out to break down the barriers of middle-class behaviour through the pursuit of sex. Despite the dramatic intensity of the writing, these passages can degenerate into obsessive repetition as Carlo has sexual relations with his mother and his grandmother

— among myriad others, mostly young men of the kind the author picked up: virile, proletarian, grimy.

Clearly Carlo has in him much of Pasolini himself, whose pederasty and politics made him a true outsider in the Italy of his day. The book is defiant, a kind of anti-novel constantly in dialogue with the reader as it searches for form. Nico Naldini, his friend and the editor of his letters, recalls: "He intended this to be a laboratory of a novel, something of a stage set."

Petrolio's incompleteness is appropriate, since it was to appear as a book under construction. "It's a novel, but it's

not written the way real novels are written," he told Moravia in 1973. One can watch as Pasolini manipulates, then reveals his own methods. First he seduces the reader with visual stimuli: "The whole cosmos was there. In that field, in that sky, in those barely visible urban horizons, and in that intoxicating odour of summer grass."

Immediately afterwards he pulls the curtain on the trick: "My notes about the landscape are applied like elements of a stage set."

Petrolio is definitely not for the casual reader. Even the dedicated fan must struggle with its ideological parentheses, its narrative lurches. Then again, from the continually surprising and non-conformist Pasolini, one would expect nothing but a challenge.

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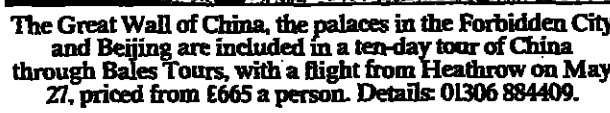
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adds that this is exacerbated by the privileged position of travellers in the South East. "They are used to being able to fly direct to most prime business destinations from Heathrow or Gatwick airports," he says, "but airlines can keep prices down by flying via another European point, as people who travel from Scotland or the North East know."

This might explain an anomaly highlighted by a reader of *The Times*, who said that a British Airways fare to San Francisco from London was £4,300, but from Copenhagen was £2,400. A BA spokeswoman says: "It is a response to the level of demand."

"All our hotels now open throughout the year and we are supporting a wide range of events to attract people to the spring, summer and autumn."

A total of 447,000 tourists visited the island last year. The largest number: 140,000, came from Britain.

The authority is about to appoint new marketing directors to cover the states of Europe, with teams of national and district sales managers reporting to them. Later this year, they will be armed with a new "family" of campaign literature, focusing on seven ways of attracting tourists. It includes promoting Barbados as an all-year wedding and honeymoon destination and publicising jazz and opera festivals, as well as such events as the Reggae Festival and the Carriacou Regatta, such as the Carriacou Life Party in May and the Crop Over Festival in July.

English-owned, Swiss-managed and

Manager Kevin Kunz quoted the sentiments of Sir Peter Ustinov, who has had a long relationship with the building, originally built in 1860: "It is a place

Famous guests include Ingrid Bergman, Lauren Bacall, T.E. Lawrence, John Le Carré (who used it as a base to research *Little Drummer Girl*), Graham Greene, Marc Chagall, Leon Uris and Lord Allenby. Unknown to tireless English owner Valentine "Val" Vester, 84, the first direct talks between Israelis and Palestinians, which led to the 1993 accord, were held in room 16.

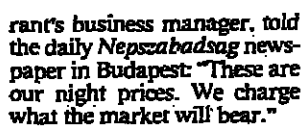
pound's recent strength will make holidays in those countries attractive again. That explains why we can offer savings of up to £300 for a couple on Swiss skiing holidays in our brochure for next season." Crystal says it has already taken almost 20,000 bookings for the 1997-98 season.

They will ask her to tackle the apparent dominance of British Airways, the questions of Heathrow's terminal five, of Manchester's second-runway protesters, and of the privatisation of the air traffic control service.

She must also keep an eye on the handing over of safety responsibility to a central European body and, if possible, prevent the Treasury from increasing the hated airport departure tax.

They both have a lot to do. Let's wish them luck.

His logic for the bill was so baffling that consumer protection authorities in Hungary believe it is a danger to the nation's burgeoning tourist industry. He said simply that he multiplied menu prices by a factor of ten after 7pm.



The case also serves as a warning to tourists who could find themselves in the same unenviable situation as the four unfortunate Danes, whose holiday was no doubt ruined not only by becoming embroiled in a legal action but by the shock of being handed a

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CHANGING TIMES

FOOTBALL

Ravanelli may lead exodus from Riverside

By DAVID MADDOCK

BRYAN ROBSON, the Middlesbrough manager, delayed the inevitable yesterday when he insisted on deferring any decision about the future of his high-profile foreign players.

Robson holds no realistic hopes of persuading Fabrizio Ravanelli, Juninho or Emerson to remain at the Riverside Stadium after Middlesbrough's relegation from the FA Carling Premiership, but the process could be hastened by a gathering interest in the pick of his squad.

AC Milan are the latest club to express an interest in Ravanelli, the Italy forward. Sources at the club suggested yesterday that it is prepared to make an £8.5 million offer to take Ravanelli home. He has been targeted by Fabio Capello, the coach, who is scheduled to return to Milan to resume control from Arrigo Sacchi, a year after leaving to join Real Madrid. Capello sees Ravanelli as the man to change Milan's faltering fortunes when he returns.

Milan's city neighbours, Internazionale, are rivals for Ravanelli's signature and it could be that the Italian gets an early move home, perhaps even as soon as next week. Emerson will clearly be joining him on a flight from Teesside airport, although perhaps to Spain. Juninho, too, indicated yesterday that the FA Cup Final will be his final game for Middlesbrough.

"Playing for my country is important to me and obviously I need exposure," the Brazil international said in response to a question about the prospect of playing in the Nationwide League first division. "But, if I go, then my heart will always remain in Middlesbrough."

Juninho denied a suggestion that he would be flying to Spain on Sunday to discuss terms with Atlético Madrid, the Spanish champions last season. There is no doubt, however, that Spain is his preferred destination and he has indicated privately that he will, reluctantly, leave England.

Juninho is desperate to play for his national side in the World Cup finals next summer and he accepts that Spanish football is promoted hugely on television in his homeland while the English game is largely overlooked. That would rule out, it seems, a move even to Manchester United, who have made overtures to Juninho's advisers.

Robson was in philosophical mood yesterday as he tacitly accepted that he would be forced into a rebuilding operation for next season. However, he said that the priority was the reclamation of a little pride against Chelsea on Saturday.

"I will wait until after the Cup Final to sit down with all my players — not just the foreign players — to judge their commitment to this club," he said. "I haven't spoken to any of them yet, but if they don't want to play in the first division, then there seems little point in keeping them."

"The priority now is obviously the Cup Final. My players have worked hard this season, they won enough points to stay up but were relegated because the Premier League took points away from them. They deserve to take something from a season like that and the Cup Final is their opportunity."

"I don't care what people say about players and the money they earn, the rewards for top players are not just financial. They want winners' medals. If we win the Cup, then there will still be a certain sense of achievement at Middlesbrough."

Robson also confirmed that he will be staying at the Riverside next season, despite the "terrible depression" of relegation, although it will no longer be in a playing capacity. "I'm fortunate to have a chairman like Steve Gibson," he said. "He has supported me and let me get on with things and with loyalty like that there is absolutely no question of me leaving. I think I owe the club something after the loyalty they have shown me."



Emerson appears preoccupied as he watches his Middlesbrough team-mates prepare for the Cup Final yesterday

Bilic completes move to Everton

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

ONE highly-rated central defender left London yesterday and another decided to stay as a week of expensive transfer activity continued. Slaven Bilic completed his expected move from West Ham United to Everton for £4.5 million, while Sol Campbell decided that his career was best served by staying with Tottenham Hotspur.

Bilic, 28, the Croatia international, moved to Goodison Park after helping West Ham to avoid relegation. He signed a five-year contract, despite the fact that Everton have yet to secure a replacement for Joe Royle as manager.

"I wasn't happy when Joe Royle left the club because he was the man who set up the move for me," Bilic said. "It was sad that Joe went, but it didn't alter the way I felt about Everton and I still wanted to join them."

"The chairman [Peter Johnson] has assured me that he has a shortlist of managers he wants to bring here and that

he has spoken with them all. Every single one of them wanted me, so I don't really have any worries about who becomes manager, although I would like the club to find one soon because time is already running out to try and find the right players."

Everton had been favourites to sign Bilic since they learnt of a clause in his contract which stipulated that any club offering more than £4 million was entitled to negotiate personal terms.

Bilic said: "I first spoke to Everton in March when I met with the chairman and Joe Royle. They were very keen to sign me then, but I didn't want to leave West Ham when they were in the middle of a relegation battle."

"I was so impressed with the club and what they had to say about their ambitions that I told them I would love to sign if they would wait for me. I was so glad when they said they would and we made a gentleman's agreement that I

would sign at the end of the season."

"It's worked out perfectly for me because not only have I got the move that I wanted, West Ham have stayed in the Premiership as well."

Campbell, who has broken into the England team this season, has signed a new four-year contract, a move that will disappoint his many admirers at other leading Premiership clubs.

Campbell said: "I am a Tottenham man and never wanted to leave. I have been here since I was 14 and I'm happy to stay for another four years. This is a boost for me, the club and the fans, who have been very good to me."

Campbell is confident that Tottenham will re-establish themselves after being constantly disrupted by injuries this season. "I spoke to the chairman [Alan Sugar] and he told me he wanted to sign a couple of quality players," Campbell said. "I feel we already have strength in depth and one or two more players will make it even better."

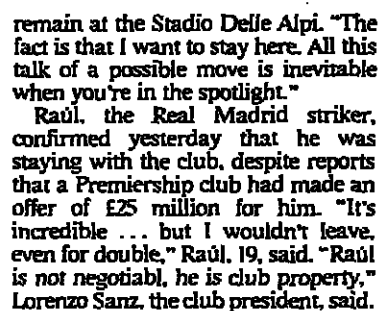
Pallister withdraws

GARY PALLISTER, the Manchester United central defender, has been forced to pull out of England's summer fixtures after learning that he needs an exploratory knee operation. He will undergo surgery tomorrow amid fears that he will need to have another cartilage removed.

Pallister, 31, had an operation on his other knee in November. He is likely to be sidelined for around a month.

Pallister will miss the match against South Africa at Old Trafford on May 24, the World Cup qualifying tie in Poland a week later and the four-nation tournament in France in June.

Glenn Hoddle, the England coach, will now turn to his stand-by list, with Dominic Matteo, 22, of Liverpool, the favourite to take Pallister's place in the 27-man squad and earn his first cap.



Ince: decision next week

Ambitious Newcastle join the chase to sign Ince

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

NEWCASTLE United have joined the race to secure the services of Paul Ince, the Internazionale and England midfielder, after he has been asked to be kept informed of developments as Ince makes a decision on whether or not to return home after two years in Italy.

Newcastle's success in securing a place in the European Cup may prove a powerful draw for Ince, 29, as would the chance to renew his international

partnership with David Batty. Ince will announce his decision after the second leg of the UEFA Cup final next week. Inter trail 1-0 to Schalke 04 after the first leg in Germany last week.

Kenny Dalglish, the Newcastle manager, is also ready to offer £2 million to Blackburn Rovers for Shay Given, the Ireland goalkeeper. Dalglish is keen to avoid the transfer going to a tribunal.

Leading FA Carling Premiership clubs will have been alerted by the

news from Italy yesterday that Juventus may consider parting with their strikers, Alessandro Del Piero and Christian Vieri.

Umberto Agnelli, whose Fiat car empire bankrolls the club, said that a bid of around £15 million may be enough to persuade him to sell Del Piero, his most highly-prized asset. However, he added: "I hope that Vieri and Del Piero continue to play for Juventus."

Del Piero made it plain he wishes to

remain at the Stadio Delle Alpi. "The fact is that I want to stay here. All this talk of a possible move is inevitable when you're in the spotlight."

Raül, the Real Madrid striker, confirmed yesterday that he was staying with the club, despite reports that a Premiership club had made an offer of £25 million for him. "It's incredible... but I wouldn't leave, even for double," Raül, 19, said. "Raül is not negotiable, he is club property," Lorenzo Sanz, the club president, said.

GOLF

Montgomerie hopes practice makes perfect

By JOHN HOPKINS, GOLF CORRESPONDENT

THE PGA European Tour has moved around the M25, from one American-designed golf course to another. It has gone from The Oxfordshire, near Thame, to the parkland of Hanbury Manor, near Hertford. Rees Jones designed The Oxfordshire in the early 1990s at about the same time as Jack Nicklaus Jr put his signature to the new Hanbury Manor course, 80 years after Harry Vardon laid out the original nine-hole version.

The two courses are as different as a wooden shafted, persimmon-headed driver and a titanium-shafted Big Bertha, but Hanbury Manor at least looks at one with its surroundings. The Oxfordshire was last seen being battered by rain squalls and a gusting wind. In Hertfordshire yesterday, the sun shone and the scene vaguely resembled a British summer's day.

"This is a good course," José María Olazábal said on the eve of the Alamo English Open. "You have to increase the level of your game to enjoy the game here. It demands accuracy. You cannot tee off with an iron and then expect to have a comfortable second to the green. To play a course like this, you have to do everything good."

Olazábal looks well. A few days spent in Munich last week at the premises of the doctor who — literally — got him back on his feet confirmed that the Spaniard is progressing satisfactorily. Were he to win the £108,330 first prize this week, he would be close to sealing his place in the Ryder Cup team in September, which, after only seven events, would be a remarkable achievement.

This is the second of four successive big events on the

European Tour and, by the end of them, every leading European player will have competed at least once. With £3.2 million at stake in prize-money in this four-week spell, nobody can afford to ignore all four events.

Colin Montgomerie's intentions focus more on improving his golf than acquiring the money, although if he does the former, then the latter will follow. His best finish in Europe this year has been sixth. "I have had three top-tens and it's nearly June," Montgomerie, who had one victory under his belt by this event last year, said. "That is no good."

In an attempt to improve matters, Montgomerie has decided to revert to a practice putting routine that he was told about at university in the United States. He has to hole 100 successive two-footers; if he gets to 96 and misses the 97th, he has to start all over again. He decided not to return home to Surrey last night and to practise his putting instead. "I will do that most days from now until the US Open," he said.

The leading golfer in Europe for the past four years, Montgomerie is keenly aware that Ian Woosnam and Bernhard Langer have begun the year playing well and that their form contrasts strongly with his own disappointing performances. At present he is 42nd in the European money-list. "I kept my record for ten years as a professional of getting better each year and I can't let it slip," Montgomerie said. "I have a great desire to win and a great desire not to lose." Now is the time for him to start demonstrating that determination.

Newcomers get chance to impress

By MEL WEBB

WHEN THE class of '97 arrived in Great Britain, they found the head prefect waiting for them. Pia Nilsson, the Solheim Cup captain, is at The Tytherington Club in Cheshire, where the American Express Tour Players' Classic starts today, and she is focusing already on an event 17 months hence.

Europe's women professionals received a 17-41 pasting in the match at St Pierre last year and Nilsson is determined that things will be different in September next year at Muirfield Village, the course that Jack Nicklaus built in Dublin, Ohio. Nilsson, who was vice-captain to Mickey Walker last year, is head coach of Swedish golf, men and women, amateur and professional — and they are not used to failure.

New selection criteria have been established for the next Solheim match. As well as the British Open, four other tournaments will carry an extra points allocation and only tournament finishes in the top ten will count. It is a bold initiative by the board of the Women Professional Golfers' European Tour, a pity, then, that with so many of Europe's best women playing in the United States, they did not also include results from the American major championships, as is the case for the Ryder Cup. Eleven of last year's team have US LPGA player's cards and Nilsson has only five picks in addition to the seven players who earn their way into the team.

Thus, with typical Swedish thoroughness, Nilsson is at The Tytherington to assess the strength of the 1997 intake of new, young players during the next four days.

Omens look promising for Davies

FROM PATRICIA DAVIES IN WILMINGTON, DELAWARE

LAURA DAVIES missed the cut in Japan last week, after being buffeted by winds of 60mph and scoring 81 in the first round, but there were reasons to be cheerful. She picked up a new putter from Maruman, her Japanese sponsor, paid an unexpectedly early visit to the tables in Atlantic City and arrived in neighbouring Delaware, to begin her defence of the McDonald's LPGA championship at the DuPont Country Club, knowing history was on her side.

The last time Davies missed a cut, in Tucson in March, she won the Standard Register First event the following week. For the fourth successive year, the odds are promising here, for this is another course that has proved to be a happy hunting ground for the world No 1. She won here last year, was second the year before, champion in 1994 and won in 1993, when the event was just a plain McDonald's before the elevation to major championship status.

The technicalities of the new putter — called Majesty, with Davies's signature on it — escape its owner. "It's got all kinds of gizmos," she said. "It's typical, high-tech stuff, with some new metal insert and some long name I can't pronounce, but it feels good and I hold some putts with it on the putting green."

In the first round today, Davies will be playing with Nancy Lopez, who will be keeping her head down and eyes averted when Davies drives. "I'll hear this whack," Lopez smiled, "but I don't look. You know you can't hit it as far but the competitive urge is there."

IN BRIEF

Law on song to breeze into quarter-finals

CHRIS LAW, who started the year with a victory in sailing's Australia Cup, enjoyed four straight wins on the second day of the Hoya Royal Lymington Cup match-racing event yesterday to reach the quarter-finals. Another Briton, Andy Green, 23, will join him in today's competition after racing to four wins and three losses in his opening round-robins.

Athletics: Ben Johnson, the Canadian sprinter, has filed an application with a court in Ontario, Canada, charging

the International Amateur Athletic Federation, the world governing body, and Athletics Canada from stopping him making a living by imposing a lifetime suspension.

Swimming: Andrew Clayton is the latest international to join the training scheme at the University of Bath's Olympic pool.

Bowls: David Wilkins and Will Thomas will represent Wales in the European team championships in Guernsey in September.

RUGBY UNION: INEXPERIENCED ENGLAND GATHER FOR ARGENTINA CHALLENGE

Rowell seeks time to carry on building

By MARK SOUSTER

AS THE England squad to tour Argentina gathered at Bisham Abbey yesterday, the doubts surrounding Jack Rowell's long-term future as coach of the national team surfaced once again. Rowell's mission statement for New England, for whom the demanding six-match trip is considered a vital part of the evolutionary process, is to lead them into the 1999 World Cup, but whether his wish will be granted remains to be seen.

It was the coach himself who raised the spectre of

change as he admitted, ahead of Sunday's departure, that there had been no negotiation and no contact with Twickenham about a new deal after his contract expires in August.

"In terms of a new contract, I am not anticipating anything," he said. "Strange things can happen and there are now parallels between rugby union and soccer in that coaches are under considerable pressure, but I enjoy that pressure and respond to it. Coaches tend to be judged on results, but as far as England is concerned, we are building towards the next World Cup

and, in terms of putting your ideas into practice, things do not happen overnight."

Looking ahead to the tour, which includes two internationals, Rowell admitted that an inexperienced squad faced a "tidal wave of a challenge", one made more difficult by the lack of time to prepare. The disruption caused by the loss of three first-choice locks and the absence of so many senior players with the British Isles.

It does not help that, within 48 hours of landing in Buenos Aires, England face a demanding opening match against Cordoba, the team for

which will be selected before the squad flies out. "It is a daunting task in one way, but a big opportunity in another for the up-and-comers," Rowell said. "It is very important that these young men have this chance to put their foot in the England door and see how far they get."

England have called up Nigel Redman, 32, from the Bath second row to replace Garath Archer, who pulled out of the tour on Tuesday. Matt Poole, the Leicester lock, was another candidate to take Archer's place, but he has a wrist injury.

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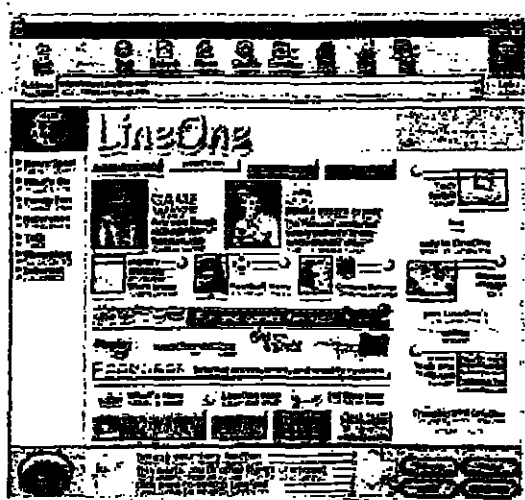
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THE TIMES THURSDAY MAY 15 1997

SPORT 43

RACING: GOSDEN-TRAINED COLT ADVANCES DERBY CLAIMS WITH YORK VICTORY

Benny The Dip pockets Dante

By JULIAN MUSCAT

BENNY THE DIP thrust himself into the Derby picture when his rhythmic, destructive stride topped the finish from eight opponents in the Grosvenor Casinos Dante Stakes at York yesterday.

The dark bay colt posted a victory for experience over an inexperienced challenger as he gradually raised the tempo throughout 10 1/2 furlongs of regional gallop, gallop, gallop, gallop. Benny The Dip saved his best for the last three furlongs, the talents of Yorkshire, Crispin Tide, Apprehension and Kingfisher Mill all perished through their own inexperience. It was left to Desert Story, who failed to see



Benny The Dip lands the Dante Stakes at York yesterday under an accomplished front-running ride from Peslier

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(3.40 York)

out the trip, to chase home the rugged winner.

Fredrically, Benny The Dip, trained by John Gosden, dropped like a stone in the Derby betting. But this was more a brilliant ride on a competent racehorse than the stuff of Epsom legend. Olivier Peslier, the French champion jockey, had never previously sat on the powerful colt. He has a fine appreciation of tactics and even from a distance one could see from Gosden's body language in the paddock that he instructed Peslier to be aggressive.

As Peslier set about posting reasonable early fractions, Kingfisher Mill, Crispin Tide and Yorkshire fought for their heads with varying degrees of petulance. It would cost them dear, but when Peslier reached the home straight he played his hand to perfection. Benny The Dip responded

generously, lengthening his stride on demand so that his immediate pursuers quickly buckled under the strain. It was little wonder that Gosden's post-race debriefing concerned the jockey's availability for Epsom.

"Olivier is a fabulous jockey," the trainer said. "There is no point fiddling about at the back; we wanted to stretch this field from the start. The horse has further to run at Epsom so I'd expect to see him handy on the pace but not on the lead. Mind you," he added with a grin, "if Entrepreneur is a superb champion we are only talking about running for second and third."

Lustre was added to Benny The Dip's performance when Gosden outlined the blocked sinus which precipitated his defeat at Sandown last month. "He was blowing in a distressed way for 45 minutes after that," the trainer said. "Olivier said there is more work to be done. The horse spluttered as he pulled him up, so he may improve again if we can clear up the problem."

A son of Silver Hawk, Benny The Dip is yet another colt lacking the appropriate Derby pedigree. Connections acknowledged the detail but pointed instead to the manner of victory as a favourable portent. Time may prove this

extended ten furlongs as far as the colt wants, although, as Gosden said, he might as well find out for sure at Epsom. Named for a pickpocket of Damon Runyon's creation, Benny The Dip emulates his namesake if he lifts the blue riband next month. He is quoted at between 7-1 and 12-1.

Given the potential within this Dante field, Benny The Dip's victory greatly increased the prospects of Entrepreneur supplementing his 2,000 Guineas gains. All that happened here was that Benny The Dip confirmed the superiority he established over Desert Story in the Royal Lodge Stakes in September.

At least Gosden can head for Epsom trusting Benny The Dip to acquit himself with credit. The same cannot be said for the Godolphin stable, which again endured a miserable afternoon as Medaleta and then Hammerstein folded tamely in their respective races. A similar showing from Classic Clide, Blue Duster and Diffident today will confirm that all is not well in Godolphin's all-conquering camp. With surprises of this magnitude unfolding around us, perhaps Benny The Dip will make it all the way home at Epsom on June 7.

Stewards' inquiry, page 3

THUNDERER
2.05 Double-1
2.35 Carranilla
3.10 Kuzba
3.40 Star Manager

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CRICKET

Lawrence begins rout of Surrey

By BARNEY SPENDER

THE OVAL (first day of four; Surrey won toss; Gloucestershire, with five first-innings wickets in hand, lead Surrey by 75 runs)

THE emergence of Gloucestershire as championship leaders has surprised many people. Without Courtney Walsh, it was said, they simply would not be able to bowl sides out. So how do you explain Surrey being rolled over for 115 yesterday?

Put it down to poor batting by all means, and maybe there was an over-confident air about some of the Surrey players. After all, the Gloucestershire spearhead, David Lawrence, is only just coming back from a horrific knee injury and is backed up by the medium pace of Smith, Young and Alleyne. Hardly an attack to lose sleep over.

Yet Gloucestershire bowled extremely well, the bowlers doing their job with gratifying efficiency. Lawrence, all buster and muscle, found a bit of pace and there was some swing for Young, but the key was the simple discipline of line and length.

After Adam Hollis had won the toss, Lawrence made the breakthrough in his first

over, when Butcher, beaten for 10, top-edged a hook to Smith at long leg.

The England selectors have enough to worry about without their prime batsman beginning the season in such wretched form. Stewart's two championship innings before yesterday's brief sojourn had produced six and 12. He needed a score, but in the fifth over, feet rooted to the crease, he pushed haltingly at Lawrence and edged to Russell without managing a run. Lawrence bowled just four overs before lunch and, although he returned to less effect in the afternoon, his job had been done.

Thorp showed signs of settling for a lengthy stay, but Alleyne, who looks innocent enough from the ring, had him leg-before for 15, the start of a collapse that saw five wickets go for 19 runs in the space of eight overs, four of the wickets falling to Young.

First, Darren Bicknell's innings of 24 ended when he offered no shot; Adam Hollis and Jason Ratcliffe edged to Ball at first slip and Shahid's edge found Lynch at second. Ben Hollis and Martin Bicknell offered some resistance, but the end came

quickly after lunch, when Smith got the reward for some accurate left-arm seam to collect the last three wickets.

The trend appeared to be continuing when Tony Wright was leg-before to Martin Bicknell in the third over of the Gloucestershire innings, but the second-wicket pair, Cunliffe and Trainor, got their heads down and added 78.

It was slow going as the Surrey bowlers also locked into a decent line. The partnership was broken shortly after tea, when the Alex Tudor, 10, launched into a fiery spell. A ball of extra pace and bounce took Trainor's gloves and lobbed to Thorpe. That brought in Martin Lynch, an old Surrey favourite, and he seemed to take special delight in facing in his former colleagues. From just 22 balls, he slapped a rapid 33 and was particularly harsh on Martin Bicknell, hitting him for three fours in one over to put Gloucestershire ahead.

Bicknell had his revenge, catching him at square-leg when an attempted pull off Tudor went wrong, but, despite the loss of Cunliffe, who grafted hard for 47, and Young before the close it was Gloucestershire's day.



Lawrence bowls flat out at the Oval, where he took the first two Surrey wickets

Hick happy to have avoided Australians

THE PARKS (first day of three; Worcestershire won toss; Oxford University, with all first-innings wickets in hand, are 323 runs behind Worcestershire)

GRAEME HICK'S decision not to face the Australians at Arundel today was vindicated in the Parks yesterday. Hick declined an invitation to play for the Duke of Norfolk's XI in the traditional opening tour fixture and opted instead to try to regain his touch against Oxford University. His move worked in exactly the manner in which he would have wished — he scored an unbeaten 164, his 91st first-class century.

Hick joined Phil Weston at

38 for one, after Wagh, the Oxford captain, had yanked Solanki with his second ball. Weston survived one chance, being dropped by Byrne immediately after completing a half-century, and Hick was palpably leg-before off a no ball from Chetan Patel when he had scored 55.

Hick was first to his century and Weston followed an hour later. They posted on 235 off 49 overs until Weston faced a wide ball from Averis and was caught for 119.

Hick was then joined by Reuben Spiring and they added an unbeaten 86 before Worcestershire declared at 359 for two. Hick's 164-ball innings included four sixes and 17 fours.

Wells hits back on bowlers' day

By MICHAEL HENDERSON

CANTERBURY (first day of four; Glamorgan won toss; Kent, with eight first-innings wickets in hand, are 212 runs behind Glamorgan)

HERE, at last, is a proper match. This was an excellent day's play between well-equipped sides on a pitch that is not completely true — but neither is it wholly false. There was bounce for the faster bowlers — turn for Paul Strang's wrist spin and, as Glamorgan's last four wickets added 171, it was not impossible to bat well.

Glamorgan's score of 279 looked a good one when Waqar Younis and Steve Watkins attacked Kent in the last hour. Fulton, gloving

Waqar's looser, was missed by Shaw, behind the stumps, and benefited from another lapse when Cottrell failed to hold one at third slip. He was not so fortunate when he top-edged a pull to long leg, where Thomas took a running catch — just as Croft had earlier, to dismiss Walker.

The day ended with a wonderful passage of play as Waqar, bowling flat out, challenged Wells to pull him — and Wells did, three times in an over, for four. To show his impartiality, Wells immediately pulled Watkins for four more. He batted beautifully and his ringing strokes nicely rounded off a day when the bowlers were dominant.

Both teams have started the season well and appear to have enough talent in their

ranks to make it a memorable summer. One hopes so: they try to play enterprising cricket. Looking at the names on the scorecard for this match, there is nobody who makes you think, "what on earth is he doing here?" or "I thought that joker packed up years ago".

The best performance belonged to Martin McCague, England's "forgotten" fast bowler. It is always imperative to link players' names with the Test side, but on the evidence so far, McCague is making his own case. He bowled a superb, hostile spell with the new ball and finished with six for 75, his second successive five-wicket haul in championship cricket.

McCague looked rhythmic, used the crease well and made the ball fly from just

short of a good length. He trimmed Morris's off stump, had Dale caught at slip next ball off glove and helmet, yanked James, defeated Cottrell with a ball that kicked like a mule, fed Waqar a short ball and ended the innings when Watkins clipped a catch to mid-wicket. He bowled very fast, very straight and very well.

The Glamorgan recovery, from 108 for six, was instigated by Croft, who went for his shots from the start and added 63 with Waqar, whose 47 was his best score in England. Thomas made 46 from 39 balls, driving through cover with distinction, and Watkins's enthusiastic thump made sure that he and his fellows had something at which to bowl.

Mushtaq returns to torment Sussex

By SIMON WILDE

TAUNTON (first day of four; Somerset won toss; Somerset, with nine first-innings wickets in hand, are 206 runs behind Sussex)

MUSHTAQ AHMED returned to championship cricket yesterday with another destructive display of leg-spin bowling. Playing his first first-class match for Somerset at Taunton since September 1995 — though he claimed ten wickets there for the Pakistanis last year — he bewitched and bewildered Sussex taking six for 70 and expediting their dismissal for 241.

Mushtaq has a remarkable record against these opponents. Twelve of their wickets came his way for 175 runs at Taunton in 1993, the best match figures of his career for the county, and another ten for 116 at Bath two years ago. Clearly, he has learnt little from their experiences.

Few picked him with any confidence. Greenfield, his first victim, was leg-before to the googly. At least he essayed a stroke, unlike Taylor, who padded up only to find the ball darting into him. Once he got among the tail, there was no end to the hapless groping and lunging.

Mushtaq took his last four wickets in the space of 50 balls, though Thurstfield, making his championship debut for Sussex, played him as well as anyone for his unbeaten 32. As usual, the chief fear for Somerset is that they will overuse him in the coming months. He was given little respite after being brought on to bowl the tenth over and struggled with his line in the middle session.

Sussex did themselves no favours by playing only five specialist batsmen, and this with a lower order that promises their caution was understandable and they plodded through to tea at just over two runs an over.

Pierre spent 155 minutes compiling 35, Athey was in almost as long for the top score of 39 and Newell took an hour reaching double figures. It was excruciating stuff, but fully vindicated by the subsidence that subsequently afflicted the innings.

Consistent Smith adds to growing reputation

By RUPERT COX

FENNER'S (first day of three; Cambridge University won the toss; Northamptonshire, with all first-innings wickets in hand, are 270 runs behind Cambridge University)

TWO contrasting innings from Cambridge University's men of Kent, Ed Smith and Will House, allied to a chirpy 60 from Robin Jones, provided the means for the students to chase out 280 for nine at Fenner's yesterday. Ultimately, though, Northamptonshire's young off-spinners, Jason Brown, who took four for 50, and Jeremy Snape, who finished with figures of three for 33, worked their way through the order, compelling Anurag Singh to declare and allow Northamptonshire ten minutes' batting.

Smith, also of England Under-19s, has already won favourable comparisons with other Cambridge luminaries such as Michael Atherton and John Crawley and he calmly continued his rich vein of form. Solid and compact, he has the powers of concentration to bat for long periods, as he proved in April against the county champions with a stylish 190.

Smith lost his opening partner, Ratledge, in the eleventh over driving loosely to cover, enabling the Smith and Jones show to commence. Though not of the comic variety, this veritable duo competently took the home team to lunch with some cultured batting — so much so that the Northamptonshire coach, John Embury, will have been content to wend his way to Arundel to play for the Duke of Norfolk's XI today, in the Australians' tour opener.

After lunch, Smith and Jones were pegged back by some tighter bowling, edged into a corner. Jones was snared by Brown, his first first-class wicket. Smith, having completed his fourth half-century of the summer, was carelessly run out by his captain, Singh, who compounded his error by being dismissed in the next over. It left House to steady the innings with a belligerent 68 from 100 balls, before another collapse sparked by the spinners undermined the students and handed the initiative to Northamptonshire.

Slip costs Surrey home tie

SURREY, who started the season hopeful of bringing home at least one trophy by the end of September, have suffered their customary attack of nerves during the past month (Simon Wilde writes). Their championship form has been mixed and they have twice lost to Kent, once in the Axa Life League, in which they are defending champions, and once in the Benson and Hedges Cup, a result that cost them a home tie in the quarter-finals, the draw for which was made yesterday.

For their penance, they have only to drive up the A12 to Chelmsford. The team they met there on May 27, Essex, beat them in a memorable NatWest Trophy semi-final tie at the Oval last August.

That defeat was largely self-inflicted — they got their batting order wrong and conceded 38 runs in wickets and no-balls — and if they can remove Stuart Law, the Essex overseas player, cheaply, Surrey ought to fancy their chances of exacting revenge over 50 overs.

Kent's reward for topping their group was a home tie with Warwickshire, who qualified by the skin of their teeth at Derby on Tuesday. Yorkshire are at home to Northamptonshire and will be confident of beating them after their unconvincing showing in the group stages. Arguably the least glamorous tie is between Leicestershire and Somerset, though Somerset are approaching one-day cricket in a rejuvenated manner under their new coach, Dermot Reeve.

England's three-match Test Trophy series and five Test matches against South Africa next summer will be followed by a triangular one-day tournament also involving Sri Lanka and a single Test against Sri Lanka at the Oval.

BENSON AND HEDGES CUP QUARTER-FINAL DRAW: Leicestershire v Somerset; Yorkshire v Northamptonshire; Kent v Warwickshire; Essex v Surrey. This to be played Tuesday, May 27.

1996 INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME: May 21: First Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. May 22: Second Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. May 23: Third Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. May 24: Fourth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. May 25: Fifth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. May 26: Sixth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. May 27: Seventh Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. May 28: Eighth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. May 29: Ninth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. May 30: Tenth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. May 31: Eleventh Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. June 1: Twelfth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. June 2: Thirteenth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. June 3: Fourteenth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. June 4: Fifteenth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. June 5: Sixteenth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. June 6: Seventeenth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. June 7: Eighteenth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. June 8: Nineteenth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. June 9: Twentieth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. June 10: Twenty-first Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. June 11: Twenty-second Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. June 12: Twenty-third Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. June 13: Twenty-fourth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. June 14: Twenty-fifth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. June 15: Twenty-sixth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. June 16: Twenty-seventh Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. June 17: Twenty-eighth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. June 18: Twenty-ninth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. June 19: Thirtieth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. June 20: Thirty-first Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. June 21: Thirty-second Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. June 22: Thirty-third Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. June 23: Thirty-fourth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. June 24: Thirty-fifth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. June 25: Thirty-sixth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. June 26: Thirty-seventh Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. June 27: Thirty-eighth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. June 28: Thirty-ninth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. June 29: Fortieth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. June 30: Forty-first Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. July 1: Forty-second Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. July 2: Forty-third Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. July 3: Forty-fourth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. July 4: Forty-fifth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. July 5: Forty-sixth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. July 6: Forty-seventh Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. July 7: Forty-eighth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. July 8: Forty-ninth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. July 9: Fiftieth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. July 10: Fifty-first Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. July 11: Fifty-second Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. 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July 29: Seventieth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. July 30: Seventy-first Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. July 31: Seventy-second Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. August 1: Seventy-third Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. August 2: Seventy-fourth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. August 3: Seventy-fifth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. August 4: Seventy-sixth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. August 5: Seventy-seventh Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. August 6: Seventy-eighth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. August 7: Seventy-ninth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. August 8: Eightieth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. August 9: Eighty-first Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. August 10: Eighty-second Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. August 11: Eighty-third Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. August 12: Eighty-fourth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. August 13: Eighty-fifth Test, Sri Lanka v England, Colombo. 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Sport must put dancing in its place

Take your partners for this week's great debate: is dancing a sport? It is a question prompted by a fierce dispute over the annual ballroom dancing match between Oxford and Cambridge Universities, which was fought out over the weekend.

This year, for the first time, female ballroom dancers from Oxford were eligible for a full Blue. The Oxford men who partnered them, by contrast, were awarded only a half-Blue. And, while the Cambridge ladies qualified for a half-Blue, for the men at Cambridge there were no Blues at all.

On Monday night, after a Cambridge victory in the match, the Cambridge Blues Committee decided unanimously that things should stay that way — with no Blues for the university's men. So, does the Cambridge Blues Committee comprise fully paid-up members of the Dinosaur Tendency, or are they the still small voice of common sense?

In 1995, the International Olympic Committee gave provisional recognition to ballroom dancing. On the back of this, there has been huge pressure from the dancers to win wider recognition for their activity as a sport.

They have renamed it "Dancesport" and claim that, in terms of physical fitness, ballroom dancers are now right up there with the nation's top athletes. They have wheeled out experts from the University of Western Australia, who found that competitive dancers required high levels of cardiovascular fitness and concluded that "it is as demanding as basketball, squash or

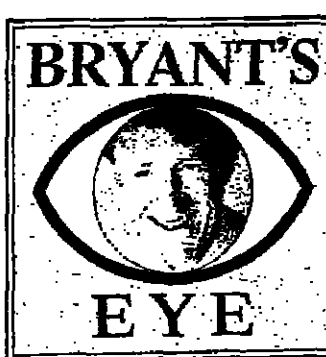
cross-country running".

Ballroom dancing's claims to being a sport, however, leave many unconvinced. "The subject comes before us every two years," Dr Christopher Thorne, the secretary of the Cambridge Blues Committee for the past 20 years, said, "but ballroom dancing has never received a single vote for half-Blue status from the 14 men captains."

"Dancing," Thorne added, "is like eating and drinking — a social grace, not a sport." While complimentary about the energy, skill and dedication of dancers, the Blues committee considers dancing only marginally more of a sport than ploughing or stamp collecting — both of which have applied for Blues status in the past.

As for the Olympic recognition, Thorne said: "We have been around longer than the Olympic movement and our views are quite as valid. Perhaps, when dancing makes the back pages of our tabloid newspapers, we will reconsider." Other critics can be even fiercer. One pundit snorted: "It is not a sport. It's foreplay."

There is certainly a lot of sex and much tradition in the beguiling mélange that is ballroom dancing. The activity began more than 70 years ago as a ritualised mating prelude for the upper classes. Now, as it aspires to be a



sport, its archaic traditions are under threat as never before.

Many believe that ballroom dancing lost its sense of direction when it started flirting with the Olympics. Most of the arguments in favour of recognising it as a sport (fit for inclusion in the Games or the university matches) boil down to the plea that the Olympics already include other activities that are artistic rather than competitive, like ice dancing and synchronised swimming.

With sports like these in the Games, you cannot leave out ballroom, the dancers clamour. It would, however, make much more sense to leave them all out. The last Olympics in Atlanta creaked painfully under the weight of a bloated catalogue of sports.

Worldwide, ballroom dancing has boomed and top couples can earn well in excess of £50,000 a year from lecturing, coaching and exhibitions. Inevitably, ballroom dancing looks likely to be given the full television treatment and the big agents are poised to milk it for all it is worth.

In his application made this February for full-Blue status for ballroom dancing, Paul Dean, the Oxford University captain, cited a number of reasons why ballroom dancing should be considered a "true sport". Among them is "the fact that, last year,

measures were introduced to provide for random drug testing ..."

Drug testing? The very mention of it is a sad, and significant, indicator of the damage being caused by those obsessed with turning dancing into "Dancesport". National-level dancers — and there are not many of those in the universities — will tell you that competition has already distorted ballroom dancing so much that it now bears no relation to social dancing.

"We couldn't go to a normal dancefloor," one told me, "we'd kick everybody over. In a hall where you might normally have 200 dancers enjoying themselves, you could not allow more than six or seven if they were competing."

Sadly, the dancers do not seem to realise where they are heading. Their obsession with turning their ballroom into a gymnasium is distorting beyond recognition what should be a beautiful and elegant ritual. The intervarsity dancers who took their tails and tails on to a floor marked out for badminton and basketball at the weekend seem blind to the threat that they could end up with a sport that owes more to steroids than to aquatics.

Will their highly-trained bodies be clothed in shell-suits and their feet protected by Nike Danceshoes? Why bother? Ballroom dancing should be fun, romantic, sexy, magnificent. When danced well, a waltz is a wonder. But can such magic survive as a sport?

JOHN BRYANT

EQUESTRIANISM: NEW PARTNERSHIP GAINS SURPRISE WIN AT WINDSOR

Lampard grasps opportunity

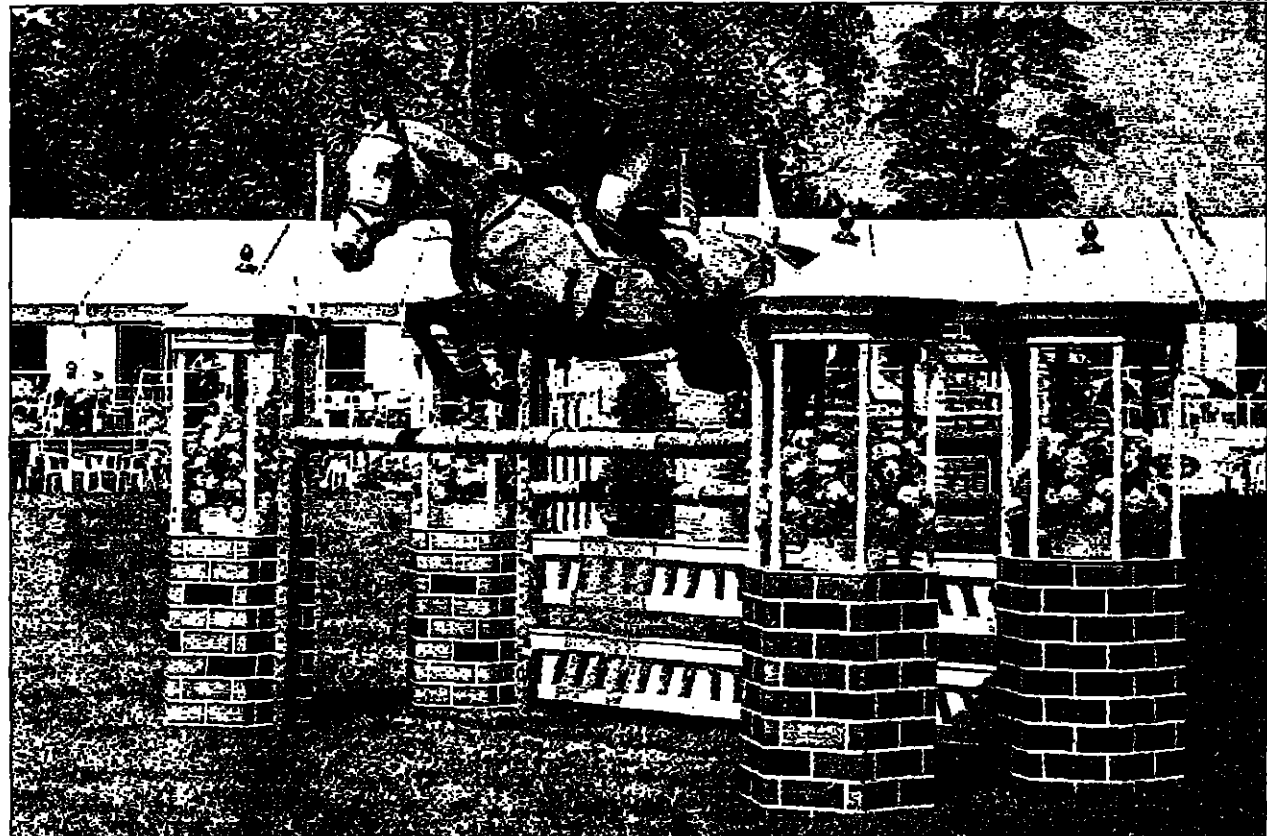
By Jenny MacArthur

DI LAMPARD, one of five riders who has been selected for the nations' cup meeting in Rome next week, made an impressive start to the Royal Windsor Horse Show yesterday when she and the ten-year-old stallion, Audacity, a horse she started riding only three months ago, won, with some comfort, the opening Land Rover Grade A event.

Reveling in the excellent going in Windsor's upgrated main arena, Audacity, owned by Jenny Willment, galloped neatly round the 12-fence course to defeat Geoff Lucke and Clowrie Chief to second place by 4.79sec.

The ease of the win came as a surprise to the Leicester-shire-based Lampard — "I was sure one of the later horses would be faster. I knew I hadn't gone crazy fast," she said — but several top partnerships, including Michael Whitaker with Virtual Village Ashley and Nick Skelton with Virtual Village Showtime, who are members of the British team for the nations' cup on Sunday, used the class as a "school" for bigger events to come and made no attempt to match Lampard's time. Guy Williams, on Harlem, was the only rider to improve on Lampard's time, but paid the penalty with eight faults.

For Lampard, who just



John Whitaker and Nebel negotiate an obstacle in the Land Rover Grade A event at the Royal Windsor Show

missed out on a place at the Olympic Games last year, the win follows an eventful few months in which she has acquired a new sponsor and three new Grade A horses.

She was telephoned "out of the blue" by Willment in February and offered both Audacity and Equity, horses formerly ridden by Clare McCauley. Two months ago, she also accepted the ride on Flaminka, a mare from Paul Darragh's yard.

Today, Lampard brings out her top horse, Abbervall Dream, for the new Hildon International Team Trial, one of four trials designed to improve the selection process for the British team for this year's European championships. A league table will be produced in July based on a rider's best three results.

The innovation has been welcomed by riders. Alison Bradley, who lost her place on the British team when her top horse, Endeavour, was sold to the United States at the end of 1995, said it would be "fairer for all". She hopes to make her mark on Aron 11, a former advanced event horse that she started riding last June. Yesterday, the 12-year-old geld-

ing, on which she has been regularly placed on the county show circuit, underlined his scope with a stylish clear round that put Bradley in seventh place.

RESULTS

LAND ROVER GRADE A: 1. Audacity 1 (D Lampard) 0 faults, 56.02sec; 2. Clowrie Chief (G Lucke) 0 faults, 60.81; 3. Harlem (G Williams) 8 faults, 61.38sec. Pairs: 1. Virtual Village Ashley (M Whitaker) 0 faults, 56.02sec; 2. Virtual Village Showtime (N Skelton) 0 faults, 56.02sec; 3. Harlem (G Williams) 8 faults, 61.38sec. Pairs: 1. Virtual Village Ashley (M Whitaker) 0 faults, 56.02sec; 2. Virtual Village Showtime (N Skelton) 0 faults, 56.02sec; 3. Harlem (G Williams) 8 faults, 61.38sec.

the European champion, Peter Charles, in the Pegasus Family Pair Relay.

The competition, which has its final at Olympia in December, produced one of the odder spectacles of the day. Related pairs of riders jump six fences against the clock in relay, but instead of exchanging a baton at the halfway point, they exchange a large teddy bear. The luckless teddy is stuffed into a knapsack and bobs up and down either on the rider's back or on the side of the horse.

Earlier, spectators round the Castle Arena saluted one of the Show's most prolific winners when Lord Patrick Beresford won the polo polo championship for the fifteenth time. Beresford, who says he is now retiring from polo, first won in 1959. Yesterday's success on Saffron was particularly rewarding. The mare, who is only six, is the third generation of his home-bred winners.

BOXING

Francis seeks victory with show of style

DEAN FRANCIS, the Basingstoke super-middleweight, must not only win tonight to proceed on his way to his world championship challenge but look impressive defending his World Boxing Organisation Intercontinental title against Kit Munroe, of Canada, at the Rivermead Leisure Centre, Reading (Srikumar Sen writes).

Francis meets David Starie, his arch-rival, in 90 days and anything other than a spectacular show by Francis will greatly encourage the watching British champion, who has an amateur win over Francis.

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 44
FILLIP (b) A movement made by bending the last joint of a finger against the thumb and suddenly releasing it (so as to propel some small object, or merely as a gesture). A smart stroke or tap given by this means. Apparently onomatopoeic. *Fillip and flirt are used in a similar sense. Boswell's Johnson, 1791: "The Prince by a fillip, made some of it [twice] fly in Ogletreth's face."*
GRINCOME (c) Old slang for syphilis. Also *crinkum*. *Hudibras Butler, 1678: "For Jealousie is but a kind/Of Clap and Grincom of the Mind."/The natural effect of Love.*
FEN (d) A section in Avicenna's *Canon*. *Fen* in the Latin version of Avicenna, an adaptation of the Arabic *fann* a species or class. *Chaucer, The Pardoner's Tale, 1386: "I suppose that Avyeca/Wrot never in canon, ne in non fen! Me wonder sorwes."*
PUFF (e) A puff of wind. Also a sound resembling this. The "spit" of a cat. A puff of tobacco smoke. *Chaucer, Canterbury Tales, 1386: "The ghost then disappeared like a puff o' tobacco."*

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THE TIMES THURSDAY MAY 15 1997

A thriller not so much clueless as plotless

Just when you were beginning to worry that — for a thriller — there have so far been curious few cliff-hanging twists in the plot of *Melissa* (Channel 4), it suddenly dawned on you that when you actually sit down calmly and take a closer look, there doesn't even seem to be a plot there at all.

Hands up who has a clue what might be going on in Alan Bleasdale's lushly filmed but utterly unengaging drama. At the end of last night's episode, the third, *Melissa* herself cops it. The fifth corpse, I think, but I've lost track — not because I can't count, but because there has been nothing very much to link the murders and too few clues as to who might have done it. We need herings please, Mr. Bleasdale, and plenty of red ones, if we're to have any chance of cracking the crimes ahead of your Detectives Cameron and Kishaw. We won't be upset, or hold it against you, if we're eventually

proved wrong: some of Britain's most senior detectives obtain convictions on evidence which, years later, proves to be as solid as yoghurt. No, all we want is to be able to laze on the sofa, place together some evidence and then point our finger at somebody. *Anybody*. As it is, we might as well just stick a pin in the cast list.

If Jennifer Ehle's *Melissa* really is dead with two episodes still to go, we're going to have to get more used to that Guy Fawkes. Guy has now lost two wives. Careless. He is proving to be a worry in other ways, too. This award-winning war correspondent, who agreed to marry *Melissa* after knowing her for barely a day, is the deluxe Fleet Street model. He gets morally hot about injustice; he has a vodka problem; he still uses a manual, portable typewriter; he hungers after "truth"; walking past a TV shop while shopping, he catches sight of a war report on the news

and dramatically drops his carrier bag full of Fairy Liquid and Wetabix and catches the next plane out of Heathrow. Somehow you get the feeling that it's not because he has suddenly taken against breakfast cereal.

In reality, journalists sit around for much of the day smoking each other's cigarettes and drinking coffee from special vending machines which recreate the authentic flavour of coffee, providing coffee is supposed to taste like it was made from mud, hot water and Tippex correction fluid.

Naturally, we all strive for accuracy. But where absolute truth is impossible to pin down, responsible journalists will always check with at least two reliable colleagues that what we are about to write sounds plausible enough to get past the night lawyer.

Having seen one massacre too many in Bosnia, Foster last night

REVIEW



Joe Joseph

turned his back on journalism. This was after refusing a job back in London as TV critic because that would be "an insult", ha ha, just Bleasdale's little joke. He then tried to write a novel.

Big mistake. Not for him, maybe. But certainly for us. After several frustrating days of pulling unpromising sheets of A4 out his Olivetti portable (they'll have to replant Norway before he has

finished even one chapter), we had to try to decipher what Guy meant when he greeted *Melissa* — the poor girl had just walked in after a hard day's work — with the words: "I've spent the last 14 years of my working life attempting to write the truth... Avoiding anything that was made up, or mixed up, or coming with spin. Writing fiction is basically all about the art of lying, skilfully... It should be easy now. For the very first time since I last wrote fiction I have permission to cheat and to lie. I can't cheat. I can't lie. I can't lie. I can't turn a train into a plane. I see a train. That's all I see. I haven't seen a plane all day." Hello?

What can you say, except that sitting indoors won't help. Get yourself to Garwick, Guy, and for heaven's sake make it pronto.

In last night's final scene, *Melissa*'s blood-soaked body looked a bit like "Carrie Barbie". This blood-covered Barbie doll which you

would have had to trek all the way to San Francisco art gallery to see if Mark Lamarr and his crew from *Planet Shabbat* (Channel 4) hadn't saved the effort. "Carrie Barbie" shares exhibition space with "Rosemary's Barbie" (a Barbie steeped in a bottle of olive oil and rosemary). "Drag Queen Barbie" and "Voodoo Barbie" (who looks like a cheesecloth-swathed pin-cushion).

Barbie is big enough to have her own art show because she is an American icon. English women take a magazine photo of Helena Christensen or Jennifer Aniston to their local hairdresser and say "I want my hair to look like that". Many American women must take their Barbies to their local plastic surgeon and say: "I want to look like that". Pamela Anderson — who is now so improbably oversized with her big breasts, big lips and

big blonde hair that she makes Diana Dors seem classy — almost does look like that. Her hairstyle has been designed in a wind tunnel, turns out to be an unexpectedly likeable host. The recipe for this sort of show tends to be let's-go-to-America-and-snigger-or-swoon. Lamarr neither sniggers nor swoons. His success may be due to the fact that he relays the latest from America without needlessly hogging the screen with either his face or his wisecracks.

"Banish those gloomy corners". Last night's *Home Front* (BBC2) commanded us. *Lighting* expert Kevin McCulloch visited a viewer who was desperate to shed more light into her home. All it actually took was a crown-silvered reflector bulb, costing £2.35, to illuminate several dark corners of her sitting room. It couldn't hurt to get one installed before episode four of *Melissa* next Monday.

BBC1

- 6.00am Business Breakfast (34844)
- 7.00am BBC Breakfast News (1) (39202)
- 9.00am Breakfast News Extra (1) (3064592)
- 9.20am Sky Challenge (6515000)
- 9.45 Kilroy (7807077)
- 10.30am Can't Cook, Won't Cook (74202)
- 11.00am News (1) Regional News and Weather (7604202)
- 11.05am The Great Escape (7061202)
- 11.35am Change That (3290496)
- 12.00am News (1) Regional News and Weather (8215753)
- 12.05pm Call My Bluff (8889375)
- 12.35pm Going for a Song (8327079)
- 1.00pm One O'Clock News (1) (48889)
- 1.30pm Regional News (88854592)
- 1.40pm The Weather Show (89630879)
- 1.45pm Neighbours (40743221)
- 2.10pm Quilley (1) (8582283)
- 2.55pm Through the Keyhole (8258776)
- 3.20pm Skipper on Style (8320474)
- 3.30pm Playdays (8110477)
- 3.50pm Postman Pat (8825641)
- 4.05pm The All New Popeye Cook (4074347)
- 4.25pm Julia Jayll and Harriet Hyde (5455263)
- 4.35pm Return to Jupiter (1223047)
- 5.00pm Newsround (4481979)
- 5.10pm No Sweat (8250405)
- 5.35pm Neighbours (1) (1) (481318)
- 6.00pm Six O'Clock News (1) (825)
- 6.30pm Regional News (405)

7.00pm Watchdog Healthcheck Special report on meningitis, a disease which kills more than 500 people a year and for which there is no clinical vaccine. An exclusive Watchdog Healthcheck poll reveals that parents still know very little about meningitis (1009)

7.30pm EastEnders George's shady business life comes under scrutiny, and Dot starts a new career in the video shop (1) (889)

8.00pm Animal Hospital: Felt Harris watches vets perform a tricky operation on a fish and Shauna Lowry needs a farm secretary with 80,000 pigs (1) (747)

8.30pm Keeping Mum: Richard buys Peggy a dog, but who will end up looking after it? (1) (2562)

9.00pm Nine O'Clock News (1) (8134)

9.30pm 999: How two young climbers trapped in a snowfield defied the odds to walk away unharmed (356318)

10.20pm The Lying Game: New series presented by Angus Deayton (1) (452589)

10.55pm Question Time: With the Government's new programme set out in the Queen's Speech yesterday, Ruth Lea, Baroness Williams and MP Kenneth Clarke and Peter Mandelson answer questions from the audience on the issues which matter most to them. Presented by David Dimbleby (1) (474028)

12.00pm The Summer of White Roses (1989) With Tom Conti. Wartime drama about a simple fisherman employed at a lake frequented by Nazis, who jeopardises his life and liberty by agreeing to take care of a prisoner leader's widow. Directed by Rajko Grlic (82535)

1.35am Weather (3113245)

VideoPlus+ and the Video PlusCode
The numbers next to each TV programme listing are Video PlusCode numbers, which allow you to programme your video recorder instantly with a VideoPlus+ "handset". Tap in the Video PlusCode for the programme you wish to record. VideoPlus+ is a trademark of Gemstar Development Ltd.

BBC2

- 6.00am Open University: Easing the Pain (8330047)
- 6.25pm Pathfinders in the Brain (8319554)
- 6.50pm Seasonal Affective Disorder (8800457)
- 7.15pm News (1) (3792757)
- 7.30pm Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles (8814008)
- 7.55pm Blue Peter (1) (1004467)
- 8.20pm Freeman Sam (8891405)
- 8.35pm The Record (1) (3198641)
- 9.00pm The Developing World (8526115)
- 9.25pm Christianity in Today's World (3041641)
- 9.45pm Watch Out (7442388)
- 10.00pm Teletubbies (91554)
- 10.30pm Storytime (8825047)
- 10.45pm The Experimenter (4812134)
- 11.05pm Space Age (7562487)
- 11.15pm Moving to English (8568012)
- 11.35pm Landmarks: Britain Since 1930 (5000478)
- 12.00pm Opening Up Technology (831196)
- 12.30pm Working Lunch (75888)
- 1.00pm Lifeschool (22202554)
- 1.25pm Science in Action (70468467)
- 1.45pm Numberline (88631841)
- 2.00pm Freeman Sam (10574028)
- 2.10pm The Flying Vet (83762488)
- 2.30pm The Mill (738)
- 3.00pm News (1) (3398573)
- 3.05pm Westminster with Nick Ross (8873554)
- 3.55pm News (1) (5475047)
- 4.00pm Bloodbushers (5452106)
- 4.25pm Steady, Cook (5455263)
- 4.55pm Esther (1350009)
- 5.30pm Today's the Day (554)
- 6.00pm Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (1) (236863)
- 6.45pm Quantum Leap: Sam leaps to 1953. He sees his own face in the mirror but he's older (1) (1) (434467)



Victims of racial hate (7.30pm)

7.30pm East Lisa Aziz investigates racial bullying in schools (1) (831)

8.00pm Regional Programmes (8399)

8.30pm Top Gear: Steve Berry on the market for the new design contest winners. Plus the viewers' design contest winners (1) (2414)

9.00pm Absolutely Fabulous: Edna is worried about her weight (1) (1) (6776)

9.30pm This Life: Nicky confides in Egg about the father of his child. Ferdy confronts Mia (1) (822863)

10.15pm A Woman Called Smith: Margaret Smith records a CD, 26 years after she was invited by Eamonn Andrews to audition for a record company (1) (875252)

10.28pm Video Nation shorts (522486)

10.30pm Newsnight (1) (71270)

11.15pm Late Review with Mark Lawson, Tony Parsons, Tom Paulin and Allison Pearson (712888)

12.00pm The Midnight Hour with Trevor Phillips (42546)

12.30pm Learning Zone: Open University: A New Sun is Born (51887)
- 2.00pm Relationships (93055)
- 2.00pm Understanding Organisations (45581)
- 4.00pm Speaking Our Language/French on a Plate (94061)
- 5.00pm 5.59 Business and Work (56987)

SKY MOVIES GOLD
6.00pm Forever Female (1983) (233389) 6.30pm The Godfather (1972) (233389) 7.00pm The Godfather Part II (1973) (233389) 7.30pm The Godfather Part III (1974) (233389) 8.00pm The Godfather (1972) (233389) 8.30pm The Godfather Part II (1973) (233389) 9.00pm The Godfather Part III (1974) (233389) 9.30pm The Godfather (1972) (233389) 10.00pm The Godfather Part II (1973) (233389) 10.30pm The Godfather Part III (1974) (233389) 11.00pm The Godfather (1972) (233389) 11.30pm The Godfather Part II (1973) (233389) 12.00pm The Godfather Part III (1974) (233389)

SKY SPORTS 1
7.00pm Sports Centre (80356) 7.30pm Wrestling: Shogun (80356) 8.00pm Sports Centre (80356) 8.30pm Wrestling: Shogun (80356) 9.00pm Sports Centre (80356) 9.30pm Wrestling: Shogun (80356) 10.00pm Sports Centre (80356) 10.30pm Wrestling: Shogun (80356) 11.00pm Sports Centre (80356) 11.30pm Wrestling: Shogun (80356) 12.00pm Sports Centre (80356)

SKY SPORTS 2
7.00pm Sports Centre (80356) 7.30pm Wrestling: Shogun (80356) 8.00pm Sports Centre (80356) 8.30pm Wrestling: Shogun (80356) 9.00pm Sports Centre (80356) 9.30pm Wrestling: Shogun (80356) 10.00pm Sports Centre (80356) 10.30pm Wrestling: Shogun (80356) 11.00pm Sports Centre (80356) 11.30pm Wrestling: Shogun (80356) 12.00pm Sports Centre (80356)

SKY SPORTS 3
7.00pm Sports Centre (80356) 7.30pm Wrestling: Shogun (80356) 8.00pm Sports Centre (80356) 8.30pm Wrestling: Shogun (80356) 9.00pm Sports Centre (80356) 9.30pm Wrestling: Shogun (80356) 10.00pm Sports Centre (80356) 10.30pm Wrestling: Shogun (80356) 11.00pm Sports Centre (80356) 11.30pm Wrestling: Shogun (80356) 12.00pm Sports Centre (80356)

THE MOVIE CHANNEL
8.15pm A Cold Heart (1984) (8204728) 8.45pm The Last Days of Pompeii (1984) (8204728) 9.15pm The Last Days of Pompeii (1984) (8204728) 9.45pm The Last Days of Pompeii (1984) (8204728) 10.15pm The Last Days of Pompeii (1984) (8204728) 10.45pm The Last Days of Pompeii (1984) (8204728) 11.15pm The Last Days of Pompeii (1984) (8204728) 11.45pm The Last Days of Pompeii (1984) (8204728) 12.15pm The Last Days of Pompeii (1984) (8204728)

HTV

- 6.00am GMTV (4617950)
- 9.25pm Supermarket Sweep (1) (1) (8523028)
- 9.55pm Regional News (341883)
- 10.00pm The Time, the Place (88080)
- 10.30pm This Morning (82660134)
- 12.20pm Regional News (8237757)
- 12.30pm News (1) and weather (8313776)
- 12.55pm Wish You Were Here (1) (8398467)
- 1.25pm Home and Away (1) (70478573)
- 1.50pm Afternoon Live (40726554)
- 2.20pm Vanessa (1) (40614825)
- 2.50pm Afternoon Live (2833405)
- 3.20pm News (8368833)
- 3.25pm Regional news and weather (8395134)
- 3.30pm The Riddlers (1) (8649221)
- 3.40pm Wizard (1) (7277028)
- 3.50pm Rupert (1) (800931)
- 4.15pm Mike and Angelo (1) (4072370)
- 4.40pm Sweet (1) (8481863)
- 5.10pm A Country Practice (7976889)
- 5.40pm News (1) and weather (840134)
- 6.00pm Home and Away (914221)
- 6.25pm HTV Weather (360812)
- 6.30pm The West Tonight (573)
- 7.00pm Emmerdale: Bill confronts Sandra at his father's funeral (1) (9405)
- 7.30pm 3-D: A report on why rail travellers are enduring the misery of crowded train journeys, while at several military bases, the Army stands guard over unused rail carriages (1) (757)
- 8.00pm The Bill: A man found nursing a broken ankle in a private garden claims he was taking a short cut on a footpath. Can Rawlin prove otherwise? (1) (5825)



Wray and Webster (8.30pm)

8.30pm My Wonderful Life: Donna is shocked when daughter Shirley announces she'd like to attend the local Roman Catholic school. She and the joyful Lawrence try to change her mind. With Emma Wray and Gary Webster (1) (7630)

9.00pm Bodyguards: Know Thine Enemy: Shaw and Wonnell have a professional difference of opinion with American bodyguards assigned to protect a high-ranking US politician touring Britain. With Sean Pertwee, Louise Lombard, John Shrapnell and Aaron Swartz (1) (484)

10.00pm News at Ten (1) and weather (81979)

10.30pm London Tonight (1) (103738)

10.40pm The West This Week (58979)

11.30pm Freeze Frame (899414)

11.45pm Highlander (403370)

12.40pm In Bed with McDiarmid (9632177)

1.10pm Yummy Business (9748177)

2.10pm Stand and Deliver (2062061)

3.05pm 3-D: Good Sex Guide Late (3178516)

4.35pm The Time, the Place (72857581)

5.00pm Garden Calendar (19974)

5.30pm News (96581)

EUROSPORT
7.00pm Women's Golf (147835) 8.30pm Motorsport (11314) 9.00pm IndyCar (81115) 10.00pm Sports Centre (80356) 11.00pm Sports Centre (80356) 12.00pm Sports Centre (80356)

UK GOLD
7.00pm Today's Top (12573) 7.30pm Nightline (851318) 8.00pm Sports Centre (80356) 8.30pm Sports Centre (80356) 9.00pm Sports Centre (80356) 9.30pm Sports Centre (80356) 10.00pm Sports Centre (80356) 10.30pm Sports Centre (80356) 11.00pm Sports Centre (80356) 11.30pm Sports Centre (80356) 12.00pm Sports Centre (80356)

GRANADA PLUS
6.00pm The Box (142069) 7.00pm Sports Centre (80356) 7.30pm Sports Centre (80356) 8.00pm Sports Centre (80356) 8.30pm Sports Centre (80356) 9.00pm Sports Centre (80356) 9.30pm Sports Centre (80356) 10.00pm Sports Centre (80356) 10.30pm Sports Centre (80356) 11.00pm Sports Centre (80356) 11.30pm Sports Centre (80356) 12.00pm Sports Centre (80356)

CENTRAL

- As HTV West except:
- 12.55pm-1.25pm A Country Practice (8398467)
- 5.10-5.40pm Shortland Street (7976889)
- 6.25pm Central News (476912)
- 10.40pm Pulling Power (847221)
- 11.10-11.40pm Millionaire (591979)
- 11.40pm Highlander (153863)
- 12.40pm Funnies Business (8632177)
- 1.10pm Ed's Night Party (9748177)
- 1.40pm Club Night (5078852)
- 2.45pm Access All Areas (8282790)
- 3.10pm Stand and Deliver (171328)
- 4.05pm Central Jobfinder '97 (7532429)
- 5.20pm Asian Eye (8960871)

WESTCOUNTRY
As HTV West except:

- 12.55pm Home and Away (8137912)
- 1.20-1.50pm Emmerdale (22215026)
- 5.10-5.40pm Home and Away (7976889)
- 6.00-7.00pm Westcountry Live (25383)
- 10.30pm Westcountry News (127318)
- 10.45pm Moments of Madness (140028)
- 11.15pm Roadrunner (130641)
- 11.45pm New York News (403370)

MERIDIAN
As HTV West except:

- 12.55pm-1.25pm A Country Practice (8398467)
- 5.10-5.40pm Shortland Street (7976889)
- 6.25pm Anglia News (476912)
- 10.40pm The Road Show (847221)
- 11.10pm Go Fishing (591979)
- 11.40pm Hunter (153863)

ANGLIA
As HTV West except:

- 12.55pm-1.25pm A Country Practice (8398467)
- 5.10-5.40pm Shortland Street (7976889)
- 6.25pm Anglia News (476912)
- 10.40pm The Road Show (847221)
- 11.10pm Go Fishing (591979)
- 11.40pm Hunter (153863)

S4C
Starts: 6.00am Sesame Street (27554)

6.00am Sesame Street (27554)

7.00pm The Big Breakfast (22912)

9.00pm Bawled (78028)

9.30pm Yegolion (150318)

12.00pm House to House (81592)

12.30pm Ricki Lake (82196)

1.00pm Slit Meltham (5487888)

1.15pm Deri Deg (6332793)

1.30pm Waterways (91467)

2.00pm Racing from York (7757)

CHANNEL 4

- 6.00am Sesame Street (1) (27554) 7.00pm The Big Breakfast (22912) 9.00pm Bawled (78028)
- 9.30pm Schools: Equinox Plus 10.25pm Geographical Eye 10.45pm The English Programme 11.30pm The English Programme (150318)
- 12.00pm House to House (81592) 12.30pm Light Lunch: Cookery and chat with celebrity guests (95912) 1.30pm Waterways (1) (91467)
- 2.00pm Racing from York: Brough Scott introduces a four-race card including 3.10pm The Yorkshire Cup and 3.04pm Michael Seely Memorial Glasgow Stakes (7757)
- 4.00pm Fifteen-to-One (1) (486) 4.30pm Countdown (1) (370) 5.00pm Ricki Lake (1) (82196) 5.30pm Pei Rescue (1) (850)
- 6.00pm Springhill: The Freeman's Look Nick as he spends his last night at home (1) (883)
- 6.30pm Hollyoaks: Jude gets an indecent proposal from a client (1) (115)
- 7.00pm Channel 4 News (1) (253089)
- 7.50pm Rhythmic Reason (1) (289389)
- 8.00pm Health Alert (2/8) Shahnaz: Pakizwan looks at the drug which saves the biggest threat to children in Britain today: alcohol (1) (3467)
- 8.30pm Taste of the Times: Sophie: Gilson experiments with sweet potatoes, air-dried ham and balsamic vinegar (1) (5202)
- 9.00pm Dispatches: Why has the Ministry of Defence continued to deny that any troops were exposed to chemical weapons during the Gulf War despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary? (1) (85395)
- 9.45pm Bright Sparks: Chingang: Conrad: Glover's film looks at the employees and passengers on the Sandbank Chain Ferry, in Poole Harbour, Dorset (1) (55880)

10.00pm Father Ted: Ted's hopes of television fame are shattered by Father Dougal, Father Jack and the world's worst tumbler (1) (1) (863793)

10.35pm Northern Exposure: Marilyn travels to Manhattan for a patch and question's her perception of himself (1) (205405)

11.30pm The Naked Truth: Nora tries to get rid of an immature but persistent boyfriend and Stupid Dave lives up to his name (1) (15134)

12.00pm Father (1973) with James Caan, Peter Boyle and Louise Lerner. An ex-con joins a husband and wife team in search of a fortune. Directed by Howard Zief (830351)

1.45pm Dancing for Dollars (1) (1) (84158)

2.45pm Breath of Life (1) (1025548)

3.20pm The Wili Come Soft Rain (76357239)

3.30pm Schools (88803)

5.25pm Backdate (1) (1) (6579516)

11.00pm FILM: American Gothic (250595)

1.00pm Slits and Hush (401254) 2.00pm The Day After Tomorrow (1997) 3.00pm The New York Times (8878

RACING 43

Benny The Dip advances claims for the Derby

SPORT

THURSDAY MAY 15 1997

CRICKET 44-45

Surrey forced on to back foot by pace-setters



Premier League rejects criticisms

Leaver returns fire against club chairmen

BY RUSSELL KEMPSON

THE dust had barely settled on a dramatic conclusion to the football season when Peter Leaver, QC, the new chief executive of the FA Premier League, yesterday mounted a strong defence of the body that runs the FA Carling Premiership.

In a frank and wide-ranging address, Leaver said that it would be "very sad for football" if Middlesbrough were to pursue through the courts their grievance about the deduction of points that cost them relegation, and defended the League against accusations of incompetence from Alex Ferguson, the manager of Manchester United.

Leaver, the former Tottenham Hotspur director, who was appointed to succeed Rick Parry three months ago, said he was "a bit surprised" by the comments made by Steve Gibson, the Middlesbrough chairman, before a 1-1 draw against Leeds United last Sunday confirmed that the three points they had had taken away for failing to fulfil a fixture against Blackburn Rovers in December would result in demotion.

"The Premier League is being run by people who have no idea what the real football world is about," Gibson, who refused to rule out legal action, had said.

Leaver said: "They might go

to court, no one can stop them, but it would be very sad for football if they did. I don't believe it is the best place to resolve this sort of dispute. It is a sporting matter and should be resolved within the sporting bodies concerned. Anyway, I don't think a court would be very impressed by people who had waited the best part of three months if they felt they had a genuine grievance."

Leaver believes that Gibson's decision may be influenced by whether or not

Riverside exodus 42
Newcastle join chase 42

Middlesbrough beat Chelsea in the FA Cup Final on Saturday. If they do, they would qualify for the Cup Winners' Cup next season. "If anything is going to happen, it will probably happen on Monday," he said, "but I'm not holding my breath."

Ferguson's main complaint had centred on the League's refusal to grant the eventual champions an extension to the season. "Mr Ferguson was not happy, but we couldn't just do it for one club," Leaver said. "We had to look across the board and see how all the other clubs would be affected."

He was more concerned by

Ferguson's remarks on Sunday, when the kick-off at the vital match between Tottenham Hotspur and Coventry City was delayed by 15 minutes — on police advice — because of traffic congestion.

Ferguson felt that the other games involving sides fighting to beat relegation — between Aston Villa and Southampton, Wimbledon and Sunderland, and Leeds and Middlesbrough — should have followed suit in the interests of fairness. "Premier League," Ferguson said, "It's more like the tiddlywinks league."

Asked why Ferguson should choose to involve himself in an issue that did not affect his club, Leaver said: "He likes it, that's what he does. Anyway, what did he expect us to do? Were we really going to ask the players in the other matches to sit around in the dressing-room at half-time while Tottenham and Coventry played catch-up? Were all the spectators expected to mill around and the stewards expected to look after them for an indeterminate period?"

"It seems to me that if you ask sensible questions, there could be only one sensible answer, and that was the decision that was taken."

"They [Manchester United] feel that they should be given consideration that other clubs may not get, but I have to be even-handed and treat all clubs in the same way. If I fall out with Manchester United, it is because I'm trying to be fair."

Leaver has written to Ferguson and Martin Edwards, the United chairman, in an effort to resolve their differences, but has yet to receive a reply.

Leaver also believes that clubs hoping for a windfall from pay-per-view television may be in for a disappointment. "I have looked into the matter, here and in other countries," Leaver said. "I have seen no evidence that it will be the incredible money-spinner that most clubs seem to think."

Leaver also revealed that the new Premiership season will start on August 9, not August 2 as the Premier League had hoped. Negotiations had taken place to bring forward the start date to benefit England's pursuit of a place in the World Cup finals in France next year, but the proposal fell because one club — believed to be Manchester United — had arranged a lucrative pre-season tour of the Far East.

Five Premiership-free weekends have been scheduled for the 1997-98 season to aid England's World Cup preparations.



Draper celebrates after his surprise victory over the formidable Austrian No 3 seed in a match played in searing heat at the Italian Open

Walsh suspended for four weeks

BY JOHN GOODBODY

DAVID WALSH, who rode Barton Bank into second place in the Tote Cheltenham Gold Cup in March, was yesterday banned for four weeks from May 17 after failing a drug test.

Walsh tested positive for amphetamines. Peter McCormick, Walsh's solicitor, said after the 90-minute hearing before the Jockey Club disciplinary committee that Walsh's explanation about how the stimulant had appeared in his urine had been accepted.

McCormick, with Walsh standing at his side, said after the hearing: "The rule is clear. The offence has been committed and something has to follow. The important thing

for David is that the committee accepted that he did not knowingly take a banned substance."

He declined to outline the explanation that was given to the three members of the committee as to how the drug appeared in the urine sample taken from Walsh at Huntingdon on February 27. "That has to remain within the four walls of the committee room," he said.

Dr Michael Turner, the chief medical officer to the Jockey Club, said that the substances were for "recreational" rather than for "performance-enhancing" purposes. When Walsh receives his licence back on June 16, he will be subject to enhanced testing at racecourses and possibly at home. The decision yesterday means that Walsh has probably lost all chance of winning the conditional jockeys' title.

Drug testing on jockeys began in October 1994. Walsh is the third to have tested positive in the 400 tests that have taken place. The analysis was carried out at King's College, London University, the laboratory accredited by the International Olympic Committee.



Walsh: failed test

Racing, page 43

Muster joins seeds on the wayside at Italian Open

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

THOMAS MUSTER, the defending champion and No 3 seed, yesterday followed the No 1 and No 2 seeds, Pete Sampras and Michael Chang, out of the Italian Open yesterday.

The Wimbledon champion, who was surprisingly defeated in the second round, 7-6, 5-7, 7-5, by the Scott Draper, of Australia.

The Wimbledon champion and No 5 seed, Richard Krajicek, of Holland, who lost to Muster in the final last year, was also eliminated, 7-6, 7-6 by Marc Gollner, of Germany.

Stamina proved to be the difference between Muster and his little-known opponent, who is ranked No 75 in the world. In a match that lasted three hours and which was played in temperatures of 32C (90F), the Austrian failed to last the pace and it was Draper, 21, who beat the winner of the recent German Open, Andrei Medvedev, in the previous round, who progressed.

"I beat a player today who's probably recognised as one of the best clay-court players of all time and to have a win like that certainly gives you a confidence boost," Draper said. "The scary part of it all is that I think I actually won over him physically and mentally. To beat these two guys is a dream come true."

Draper, who said the first set was the hardest he had ever played, made the decisive break to lead 6-5 in the third set when Muster double faulted. He then served out for the match.

The unseeded American, Jim Courier, followed his first-round win over Sampras by defeating Albert Portas, of Spain, 7-6, 6-2. Courier won the tournament in 1992 and 1993.

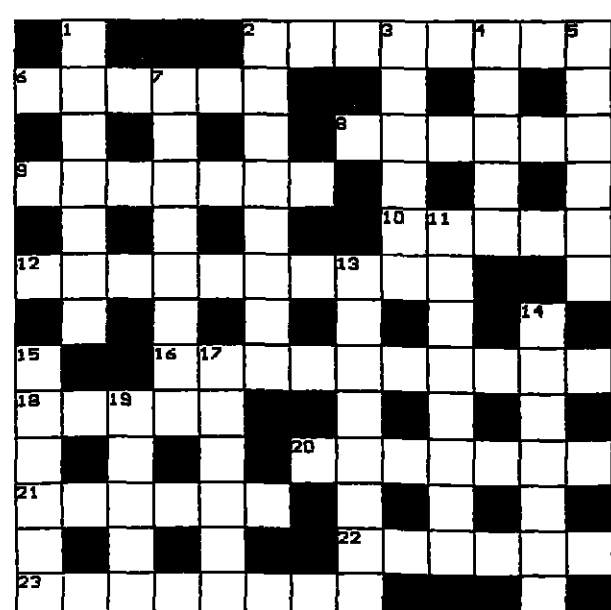
The former world No 1 Mats Wilander, of Sweden, and Karel Novacek, of Czechoslovakia, have been banned for three months by the International Tennis Federation after withdrawing their appeals against positive drug tests taken at the 1995 French Open. They also were ordered

to return all the prize-money they have won since that event — \$1,000,000 for Novacek, about \$116,000 for Wilander — and have forfeited all ATP Tour computer ranking points won in that period. Both players insisted they were unaware of the presence of cocaine in their bodies, but agreed the urine samples had belonged to them.

Stefi Graf, of Germany, reached the quarter-finals of the German Open in Berlin when she defeated Ruxandra Dragomir, of Romania, 6-3, 6-2. Graf, the No 1 seed, was playing only her second match after returning from a knee injury. The No 3 seed, Lindsay Davenport, lost to Sandrine Testud, of France, 7-6, 7-6.

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD

No 1094 in association with BRITISH MIDLAND



- ACROSS
- 2 Deceitful actions (8)
 - 6 College finance officer (6)
 - 8 John — poet Laureate 1688 (6)
 - 9 Rough cider (7)
 - 10 Falsify; smother (5)
 - 12 Suppliant (10)
 - 16 Naughtily engaged (2,2,2,4)
 - 18 A ship's capture (5)
 - 20 Late afternoon (7)
 - 21 Yorks, bowler once: state of truth (6)
 - 22 Lancs. town: wrestling hold (6)
 - 23 Confine (8)
- DOWN
- 1 Accelerate: show signs of life (7)
 - 2 Rule-of-silence monk (8)
 - 3 Wine pitcher (6)
 - 4 A tree: senior (5)
 - 5 Over there (arch) (6)
 - 7 Not genuine (8)
 - 11 New; unchanged (8)
 - 13 Anticlimactic occasion (3-5)
 - 14 Amy — Byer: two US presidents (7)
 - 15 Tiny broken-off length (6)
 - 17 Tin/lead ware (6)
 - 19 Abductor of Helen (5)

British Midland
The Airline for Europe

PRIZES: THE WINNER will receive a return ticket travelling Economy Class to anywhere on British Midland's domestic or international network.

THE RUNNER-UP will receive a return ticket to anywhere on British Midland's domestic network. British Midland offers an extensive range of destinations throughout the UK as well as Europe and has now added daily flights from Heathrow to Copenhagen, Oslo and Gothenburg. With over 1,500 flights a week to 18 European destinations, British Midland is the Airline for Europe.

All flights are subject to availability.

Post your entry to Times Two Crossword, PO Box 6886, London E2 8SP to arrive by next Monday. The winners' names and solution will appear on Wednesday.

Name/Address

SOLUTION TO NO 1093
ACROSS: 6 Blemish 7 Aloof 9 Spout 10 Tolkien 11 Take on trust 14 Remonstrance 17 Ceramic 19 Eight 21 Stove 22 Liturgy
DOWN: 1 Demo 2 Mistaken 3 Ghetto 4 Wall 5 Saltbush 6 Bask 8 Finite 11 To-morrow 12 Travesty 13 Precip 15 Tackle 16 Stay 18 Meek 20 Girl

Nice try, but flawed conversion

The Minister for Sport thinks that playing in Britain should mean qualification for one united team. Simon Barnes disagrees

Let us look at Tony Banks from another angle. All right, he said yesterday that foreigners who play for English clubs should play for England instead of Italy, France, Brazil, Denmark, etc. All right, he thinks that there should be a single national team — Team UK — rather than regional teams such as England, Scotland and Wales.

First reaction from anyone with sporting blood: the man's a fool. Second reaction: let's pick a team. Wasim to open the bowling. Juninho in the hole. Fienaar as captain... no one with sporting instincts could resist.

All of which goes to show that Banks is not a fool at all. He has proved that he is a politician and one who understands that the job of sports minister is not a straightforward one. The Conservative administration, after its brief experiment with the loquacious Colin Moynihan, decided that the job was best done by a nebbish. This is a viddish term for a hole in the air, a person whose personal impact is so great that, when he leaves the room, it feels as if someone has come in.

The Conservatives gave us a succession of these. Dennis Howell, Labour's long-term sports minister, used to claim

that most people in the country believed that he was still doing the job. After all, he was still the only sports minister any one had ever heard of.

Enter Banksie. Remember when Bagheera, the black panther, attacks the monkey people in *The Jungle Book*? "He has noticed us," the monkeys shout in delight. "Bagheera has noticed us!"

Well, Banksie, sport has noticed you. "Tony Blair said to me: 'Get in there and live it up,' and I'm going to do precisely that." And that is all

very amusing, is it not? "My role here is to be a bit challenging and controversial and to act as a catalyst."

The matters he brings up are actually worth discussing, even if, in this form, they are more fantasy than coherent thought. The notion of national affiliation in sport is a vexed one, in a world full of jumbo jets and high rewards for the athlete of the moment.

The English cricket team was, for a while, the Liberia of the cricket world, with such flag-of-convenience players as

Hick, Lamb and Smith. The Ireland football team is filled with accents from everywhere but Ireland.

And the partition of the United Kingdom in sporting terms has always been an oddity. In rugby union, it is essential — but only because, without it, there would not be enough top-class rugby countries for a competition.

In football, partition is a matter of little import, small power-bases. The reason that there is never a British team in the Olympic football tournament is because Team UK would erode these power-bases. Celtic and Rangers play in the ridiculous Scottish league, rather than a UK Premiership, for the same reason. It is in some ways clearly due, ripe for reform.

So Banks does touch on legitimate areas for debate. However, we also have to consider the nature of his job. He is not a half-cock newspaper columnist, a professional kite-flier, a full-time shooter from the hip. He is a minister of the crown. He needs to show that he has a breadth and depth of understanding of his subject and the wisdom to deal with the situations that the job throws up.

Nice ideas, Banksie. But — well, they're not really completely baked, are they?

ENGLAND'S DREAM TEAMS

- CRICKET XI
M A Atherton (Lancashire and England)
D G Benaud (Queensland and Australia)
G P Thorpe (Sussex and England)
D M Jones (Derbyshire and Australia)
S G Law (Essex and Australia)
J A J Smeaton (Sussex and England)
J G Smith (Lancashire and Pakistan)
A A Donald (Worcestershire and S Africa)
W Vande (Glamorgan and South Africa)
W Vande (Glamorgan and South Africa)
- FOOTBALL XI
P Schuster (Man United and Denmark)
G Neville (Man United and England)
S Bello (Everton and Croatia)
F Labeau (Chelsea and France)
R Giggs (Man United and Wales)
R Keane (Man United and Ireland)
J Kirsten (Middlesbrough and Brazil)
D Beckham (Man United and England)
D Bergham (Arsenal and Holland)
A Shearer (Newcastle United and England)
G Zola (Chelsea and Italy)
- RUGBY UNION XV
G Rees (Wales and Canada)
R Logan (Wales and Scotland)
J Gascara (Wales and England)
V Tuganov (Newcastle and W Samoa)
M O'Brien (Bedford and England)
A Shearer (Glamorgan and South Africa)
A Healy (Wales and England)

N8

Not your rank and file pint.

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